

# Braille Monitor



OCTOBER, 1980

VOICE OF THE NATIONAL FEDERATION OF THE BLIND

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# THE BRAILLE MONITOR

PUBLICATION OF THE  
NATIONAL FEDERATION OF THE BLIND

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## THE BRAILLE MONITOR

PUBLISHED MONTHLY IN INKPRINT, BRAILLE, AND ON TALKING-BOOK DISCS BY  
THE NATIONAL FEDERATION OF THE BLIND

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\* \* \*

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ISSN 0006-8829

### COMMENT FROM THE EDITOR

The September issue of the *Monitor* was largely taken up with a report of occurrences at the national convention this summer in Minneapolis. The same is true of the present issue. The events surrounding our meeting in Minneapolis were so important and far-reaching in their impact upon the lives of the blind that they should be reported fully. The happenings in Minneapolis earlier in July will influence the life of

every blind man, woman, and child in this country through the years and the decades ahead. For those who were there, these two issues of the *Monitor* will provide a record and a reference. For those who were not present, the convention can hopefully be presented in full enough detail to come to life in tone and substance. It was an exciting, joyous, vibrant, optimistic, wonderful occasion.

### PRESIDENTIAL REPORT, NATIONAL CONVENTION, 1980

One of the highlights of the NFB convention each year is the Presidential Report, which traditionally occurs Tuesday afternoon. This year's report was especially informative and inspiring. The substance of the Presidential Report is as follows:

We have made real progress at the National Center for the Blind this year. As you know, the tenBroek Fund owns the property. It is very close to being paid off. We have one more payment to make on it and that will be in January of next year.

We have new office space and new programs at the National Center for the Blind. Federation members and other people who have been there have taken pride in that property. It is ours. It does not belong to any government or any agency. It belongs to the blind. It is as good a facility as you can find in this country and has the potential of being the very best physical plant in the nation. We occupy some 40,000 feet of floor space. If you were to rent that kind of office space, you would pay in excess of \$100,000 a year. That would be mighty

cheap. You really would not get it for \$2.50 a square foot.

Let me tell you what is located in our space at the National Center: The NFB Headquarters Office, a big conference and meeting area, the JOB program. We have a computer that we are beginning to put into operation. We are working on the production of Braille. I am not sure how soon we will have it, but we are working on it. We are doing tape duplicating there. We are one of the five testing places of IBM's new voice typewriter. We have all of our literature there and are sending out hundreds of thousands of items per year. We handle aids and appliances. More and more affiliates are coming to visit the National Center and are spending the day there. It is truly an impressive place and one that I will talk to you about visiting a little later when I speak about future convention sites.

JOB, Job Opportunities for the Blind, has been very successful. As you know, a grant from the Labor Department has made it possible for us to have a program

to do these things: send out service spots to radio stations throughout the country; send our literature on records, cassettes, and in Braille to blind persons who are seeking jobs, as well as printed material to potential employers. The thing that JOB has been able to do is to go across state lines in a way that state rehabilitation programs have trouble doing. We are not meant to replace the state rehabilitation agencies. But we have a volunteer coordinator in each state and that volunteer coordinator can receive and give information. We know that over 20 blind people have gotten jobs as a result of what we have already done in JOB. (Applause.) We are able to match up people and jobs in different parts of the country. We have held one seminar already in Idaho. We are holding another one here this coming Saturday. There will be a third one held this fall in Baltimore. These are for potential JOB applicants and for others interested in employment of the blind. We are doing a whole variety of things that help us get jobs for blind people. This is one of the most exciting and productive programs that we have ever had in the Federation. The staff of JOB are: Mrs. Stewart, Secretary; Mrs. Walhof, Assistant Director; and Mr. Gerstenberger, Director. That then is one program located in the National Center.

Jim Gashel serves as our Director of Governmental Affairs. Ms. Harmon also works in that office with him as a secretary. Mrs. Anderson serves as Assistant to the President. Mr. Lundquist is our Director of Publications and Specialized Materials. Mr. Thompson also works in that department. Miss Simms is one of the office staff. She handles the switchboard. She is the voice of the National Center that mostly you will be hearing when you call in. Mrs. McCraw, Connie McCraw, (applause) is on the National Staff and does a variety of

work at the Center. Mrs. Pelzer is also a member of the National Office Staff and so is Mrs. Nevy. That takes care of the NFB staff at the National Office. As a matter of disclosure, (it has been said before in convention after convention, but it needs to be said again) Dick Edlund is an employee of the tenBroek Fund. He serves as a field representative and as Fiscal Agent for that Fund. As you know, Dick Edlund is not on the Board of the Fund. Also, the tenBroek Fund employs an accountant, Mr. Stewart, who is here. . (not the husband of the Mrs. Stewart you just heard mentioned, that is a different Stewart). Mr. Medlin and Mr. Alred are people who work on the maintenance staff. They are tenBroek employees and Mr. Kenny is providing janitorial and maintenance work at the Center. That is the staff of the tenBroek Fund. As far as the work that is done for the Federation by me and by Miss Myrick, that is volunteer work. Miss Myrick is not an employee of the Federation.

This year we have had a number of civil rights and other related cases that you should know about. I want to mention them to you quickly and point out to you—if indeed it needs pointing out—why some of our opponents are so troubled and why we have made some people so mad at us. It is not difficult to see when you go down the line.

Let us talk about the Tennessee vendors. We have been working with vendors in the State of Tennessee recently. What has happened there shows something about us, something about why any vendor in his or her right mind would be a part of this outfit, something about the American Council of the Blind and something about NAC. We asked the State agency in Tennessee for a review of some of the problems. There are two vendors in the same location, one managing a manual opera-

tion, and the other a vending machine operation. Neither can make a good living there. One person could make a very good living as the manager of both, but the agency did what we have long objected to—they put two operators in rather than one to handle the vending facility and the machines. Otis Stephens, President of the American Council affiliate in Tennessee and also a big wheel in the American Council of the Blind nationally, is currently the President of NAC. My information is that he called Lev Williams, our State President, and asked him to see if he could get the vendors to settle down and not rock the boat and not create trouble and problems. Is that the truth, Lev? I didn't talk to you. I only heard. (From the audience Lev Williams answered in the affirmative.) Lev says it is so. That will tell you something. We will probably lose at the agency level on some of the appeals we are helping the Tennessee vendors make. But then we will go to arbitration. I wonder how any vendor can really be a member of ACB. Jim Gashel is going there July 12 to do what has to be done to try to help the vendors in Tennessee. There are a whole series of problems with the Tennessee vending program, including a complete disregard of the Blind Vendor's Committee. I might say to you that when one Pinckney Claude Seales went in as Director of the Tennessee Program for the Blind about two or three years ago, we told them he wasn't a very good director. They did not believe us, but on Friday, June 13, (it was an unlucky day for Brother Seales) he was fired this year. (Applause.) We told them when he went in how bad he was, and we told them when he came out how bad he was. Apparently they now agree with us. . . (Comment from the audience indicating that Seales resigned.)...Well, alright, he was permitted to resign. Anyway, let us say it

like this: He was separated from the service on Friday, June 13.

Now let me talk about the Jessie Nash case. Here is a good example of something that doesn't just affect Jessie Nash and it doesn't just affect Georgia. It affects vendors, all vendors—everywhere. But it doesn't affect just vendors. It affects all of us who are blind. Jessie Nash, as you know, had a facility on the Marine base in Albany, Georgia. The Marines decided to put her and other people who were operating vending facilities out of business. They decided to put the food service out to bid by private business in January of 1977. Sometimes people say, "You people make a protest, but what good does it do? After all, years go by." Yes, they do, but we get there. In February of 1977, Jessie Nash filed a complaint with our assistance asking the State rehabilitation agency to block what the Marines were doing. The agency didn't do anything, and didn't even give her a hearing. Her vending facility closed in April of 1977 with no action. On April 18th we took the matter to Federal Court. The Federal Court said that she had to exhaust her remedies administratively and sent the case back to the State of Georgia, back to the rehabilitation agency. The hearing officer for Georgia ruled that it wasn't the State's problem and we had to deal with the Marine Corps. We filed for Federal arbitration. The Department of HEW said that the State made a mistake; it erred in refusing to grant a full evidentiary hearing so the case was sent back to Georgia. This was the third time we went back to the State. Give her a full evidentiary hearing, HEW said. Late in 1977 the State had what it called a hearing. It heard the case and ruled against her. Again we filed for Federal arbitration. We did not give up. That was December of 1977. Since then a number of things have occurred: four days of hear-

ings; Jim Gashel went down there and others did before an arbitration panel convened by the Secretary of Health, Education and Welfare; three briefs by each side, ours were prepared largely by Jim Gashel and Marc Maurer; 750 pages of transcript; a day of depositions; and now the case has been decided in our favor. (Applause.) Where were the ACB people with the Jessie Nash case? Where was NAC with its quality services and standards? It was not out on the line trying to help us do something about this business. As a matter of fact my information is that NAC is going to do what it can (you will hear some later in the convention about this) to try to see that we lose the Jessie Nash case if the State of Georgia appeals to the Courts, which it may, and if it does we will fight them in the Courts and go wherever we have to go. What we have asked for is this: (I do not know how much of all of this we will get. I know we are going to get some of it, how much I'm not sure.) We have asked that Georgia be ordered to get her facility back for her at the Marine Base or if not, one equally good. We have asked that legal fees for arbitration be paid. We have asked for the back pay which Jessie Nash has lost. I do not know how much of that we will get, but I will bet you we will get a good deal of it. I think it will take a fight, longer still, but we will be in there.

The Steven Henry case (we talked about it year after year), finally that one is really finished and settled. Let me tell you how good it is. He has been given a full-time job at the New Orleans Post Office at over \$17,000 a year. (Applause.) So some people say what does the Federation do—well, here is what it does—he did not start that, even though he was having problems, until he came in 1976 to the National Convention, and right after that we started the case. There were reprisals against him along the

way by the postmaster down there. The Post Office people made him sit at a desk and do nothing—you remember it. Final settlement was this spring. He got somewhere around \$19,000 back pay plus accrued fringe and vacation benefits. (Applause.) People ask what does this outfit do and are we on the decline? No, we are not on the decline.

The Airline Case: The FAA granted our petition February 22, so our case was dismissed out of Court. The rules are still to be made, but the FAA has admitted virtually all of the things that we said—that is, that our canes are not dangerous on planes and that we ought to be able to keep them and all the rest of it.

Cincinnati and Houston cases—one is in Court, and the other is just about to be. NAC filed a brief for management in the Cincinnati case, with publicly contributed funds, no less, and with the most expensive law firm in the country, and, of course, we filed on the side of the NLRB and the workers. National Industries for the Blind also filed a brief, but did not call it a brief, they called it a memorandum because it did not meet the time deadline (it was too late), but the Court let them get it in. Whoever loses will undoubtedly appeal, and this case will go to the U.S. Supreme Court if it is appealed. It will set legal precedents that will affect every blind person not only in workshops but throughout this country in every way. (Applause.) And a lot of people say, what does my Pre-Authorized Check (PAC) money go for? Well, it goes for that kind of thing. We filed the cases, and we have been out there on the picket lines and doing other things; we are now in the Courts, and we and the NLRB are saying to the Cincinnati Association and the Houston Lighthouse: "Abide by the law and the orders," and they say: "No, we'll fight



you in the Courts." That is fine; we will win those cases before we are through.

Ken Gould is a chemist at Exxon, a blind man, a member of the NFB. They have not promoted him. They have discriminated against him in advancement despite the fact that he has discovered and created some formulas for the Company that are unique and valuable. From the beginning we advised and worked with him. We pressed the Labor Department to act under Section 503 of the Rehabilitation Act to make Exxon engage in the kind of affirmative action it ought to and also treat Gould fairly. The Labor Department found in our favor and proceeded to try to conciliate with Exxon, which would be the next step. I think they would have taken a long time—maybe forever—if we had not pressed them on it, and of course, that makes people mad. They say you are a militant. Well, that is fine, except a man's got a low level job there—he is a chemist and apparently a good one. The Labor Department, as I say, found in our favor. The Gould case has been going on for more than two years, but we have pressured and pressured, and the Department now is filing charges against Exxon, which, if successful (and remember this is the Labor Department not the NFB filing these charges) Exxon would be debarred from all Federal contracts. (Applause and cheers.) The Labor Department is filing charges under Section 503 of the Rehabilitation Act, affirmative action, and I say, we are going to have some more people that say: "Look at that militant NFB." That's fine.

Naydene Hackette: This case started in North Carolina in 1975 and now here it is 1980. She now lives in Kentucky. The complaint is against Firestone; again it is a Section 503 case. They wouldn't hire her in the tire plant; she was qualified. In 1977 the Labor Department found that Fire-

stone had violated Section 503, and then they tried conciliation. Well, that's fine. We kept pressuring them and saying: "In the meantime she doesn't have a job." Conciliation didn't work. The Department of Labor has now filed charges against Firestone which can result in debarment from Federal contracts, (applause) and the case is now before a Labor Department Administrative Law Judge. What we are asking is \$60,000 in back pay for Naydene Hackette. It is fair to say that the debarment complaints would not have been filed in either the Gould or the Hackette cases without our continued pressure, and yet some people say to me: "What good is the NFB to me as a blind person." (Applause.) These cases are the answer.

Joanne Walker is a blind teacher in the Wisconsin Public Schools. She was placed on probation in March of this year. We filed a complaint with the Federal Education Department, charging that the school district was violating Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act. Jim Gashel is working on that with her. We wouldn't have filed the complaint if we hadn't thought she was right—this is discrimination on the basis of blindness.

Laurie Eckery now is battling because (if you will read in recent *Monitors*) she has been discriminated against in employment with a hospital. This is Laurie Eckery from Nebraska. The Office for Civil Rights in the Department of Health and Human Services is now investigating the case. This is another Section 504 complaint...We'll keep pressuring on this, and of course it may be 1982 before we get it done, but we will get it done. (Applause.)

Dr. Spencer Lewis, a doctor in Louisiana, has become blind; he has a practice. The hospital has refused to let him continue to practice there. His patients want him to continue, and we think that he ought to be

able to practice if he and his patients want him to; and so, we are working with him. Jim Gashel is working with the people in Louisiana on it, and with him, and we will press that case. Those are some of the civil rights cases we have been working on.

Do you wonder that I say that this is the best year that we have had as a Federation? And sure! I know that the battles are tough. We witnessed that this morning with the Kiwanis Club. People call you all kinds of nasty names, especially as you begin to get close to victory in these matters. But you know where we got when we simply sat down and were grateful for the crumbs? We tried that.

Some of you have met Bernadette Krajewski from Wisconsin. She is working at the National Office for a three month try-out on the IBM voice typewriter. She will be glad to talk with you about that. We think that this machine (properly used) may have the potential to be a great help to blind persons in secretarial work. That typewriter is, as I have said, being tried at five places. We are one of the five. No other consumer group is one of those five. Also interning at the National Office this year is Al Sten from Massachusetts, a law student. He is working as an intern with our Director of Governmental Affairs, Jim Gashel.

I have talked to you about JOB. I would mention to you one nasty little sidelight. You would expect the NAC people to try to destroy that program, so they have now gone to the Department of Labor (and they have contacted some Congressmen) because in one of our books—a 75-page book on compliance in Section 504—my 1975 banquet speech (Blindness: Is the Public Against Us?) appears. And, because we said in that speech that NAC is a bad outfit, they now say that we misspent Federal funds and they would like the GAO to

audit us. It is not by chance that the only newspaper I know of in the country which printed a big spread about supposed mispending of Federal funds like that was (who do you guess?) the *Des Moines Register*. Well, I don't believe that they are going to get very much satisfaction out of the Labor Department on this. I want you to hear a little bit of the article that appeared in the *Des Moines Register* to show you what kind of outfit it is. They are real clean fighters, that *Des Moines Register* crowd. Notice how they do not say the organized blind—they do not say the National Federation of the Blind. By the way, the February *Monitor* must have frightened the *Des Moines Register*. We distributed 500,000 copies throughout Iowa and although I was hot copy for the *Des Moines Register* and so was the Federation before February, only one time do I know of that I have even been mentioned in the *Des Moines Register*, or the Federation has, since February. (Applause.) Now here is what they say under date of Thursday, June 12, 1980. Notice the headline: "Jernigan Group Assailed for Printed Critique of Foe." That's their headline. Then: "The National Federation of the Blind is under fire," (well, I do not think we are under fire because NAC says we are a bad outfit to the *Des Moines Register*):

The National Federation of the Blind is under fire for using part of a \$157,323 Federal grant to propagate the views of its president, Kenneth Jernigan, and to attack an old Jernigan foe as "odious and repulsive."

The money was awarded to the Federation under a U.S. Labor Department contract last December. The federation said it would use the funds to establish a reference service to help the blind find jobs.

One part of the project, known as Job Opportunities for the Blind (JOB), [JOB is not one part of the project; it is the project] has

been to send prospective employers a 60-page publication that, among other things, explains federal requirements for hiring the handicapped.

But 17 pages are taken up with the text of a speech Jernigan gave in 1975 that, in general, condemns public attitudes toward blindness. At one point, the speech berates the National Accreditation Council for Agencies Serving the Blind and Visually Handicapped, a New York-based organization that has been at odds with Jernigan for years.

### UNCLE TOMS

Jernigan, director of the Iowa Commission for the Blind for 20 years prior to his resignation in 1978, contends the council is the hand maiden of organizations of the blind that favor custodial care. He calls them "Uncle Toms" in the speech reprinted in the JOB publication.

The speech characterized the council as symbolizing "everything odious and repulsive in our long and painful tradition—custodialism by governmental and private social service agencies, ward status, vested interest, intimidation, exclusion, and second-class citizenship."

The cover of the publication for prospective employers of the blind states, "This material is provided to you as a service of Job Opportunities for the Blind (JOB). JOB is operated by the National Federation of the Blind under contract with the U.S. Department of Labor."

Richard Bleecker, an official of the National Accreditation Council, has complained to U.S. Labor Secretary Ray Marshall about the granting of the \$157,323 contract to the federation, saying the arrangement makes it appear as if the Labor Department "supports—and tacitly endorses—the activities of a group that attacks legitimate organizations of and for the blind that refuse to be dominated by NFB's tactics."

Bleecker pointed specifically to the portion of the reprinted Jernigan speech in the JOB publication that attacked the council.

### TAXPAYERS' MONEY

He asked Marshall: "Can you please tell me how this gratuitous and false statement about (the council) will help blind people get jobs? And I trust that you have an explanation for allowing taxpayers' money to pay for these insults."

Marshall also was asked to explain what "safeguards" the Labor Department had taken to "prevent the 'Job Opportunities for the Blind' contract from becoming an undisguised showpiece for NFB's radical philosophy and militant methods?"

A Labor Department spokesman said the department's employment and training administration had drafted a reply to Bleecker's letter, but he declined to disclose its contents on the ground that Marshall had not reviewed or signed it.

Duane Gerstenberger, director of the federation's JOB project, dismissed Bleecker's complaint as "simply one more ploy on the part of the NAC and presumably its crony, The Register." He declined to discuss the issue further.

That is a straight out lie; he did not "decline to discuss the issue further." He said: "Look, if you quote me you must also, if you are going to be honest, say that I said I wouldn't give you any interviews and none of us would until Mr. Gartner (who is the editor of the *Register*) grants the interview that the *Braille Monitor* asked him for in a letter which was sent on May 13 of this year, and we know he got it." The letter said: "Dear Mr. Gartner," (this is from Jim Gashel) "In my capacity as Acting Editor of the *Braille Monitor* I request that you grant me an interview. Serious allegations have been made concerning improper acts on the part of personnel of the *Des Moines Register* and

*Tribune*, and we wish to have your side of the story before going to press. The charges are of a serious nature, and we wish to give you a full and fair opportunity to respond. If you are willing to grant this interview, please let me know immediately since it is planned that we will publish the reports of our investigation in an early issue of the *Monitor*." Mr. Gartner did not choose to reply, and yet he complains that we won't give him an interview.

Now returning to the *Register* article, I will give you the last paragraph of it:

Last February, the *Braille Monitor*, a publication of the National Federation of the Blind, printed a 20-page special edition entitled, "The Bizarre World of the Des Moines Register: Malicious and Reckless Disregard of the Truth." Written by Jernigan, whose fund-raising operations and stewardship of the Iowa Commission for the Blind had been questioned in a number of *Register* articles, characterized the newspaper as "parochial, arrogant, bigoted, and narrow."

End of article. (Applause.) So you can see that a good time is being had by all. (Laughter.)

I want you to hear now the JOB spots. Three radio public service spot announcements were then played, giving a sampling of the JOB publicity. Each spot carries the positive message that blind people can work on terms of equality if given the opportunity to do so. Blind persons holding a wide variety of jobs are featured along with the concluding words: "For further information about employment opportunities for the blind contact JOB, 1800 Johnson Street, Baltimore, Maryland 21230 or call toll-free 800-638-7518. This message was presented as a public service by this station, the U.S. Department of Labor, and members of the National Federation of the Blind." Dr. Jernigan ex-

plained that so far these spots have been very helpful in bringing new applicants for employment to the JOB program, and they are also helping in the employer contacts; but more can be done if we spread the word to the radio stations and ask that the spots be aired regularly. Additional copies of the JOB spots can be obtained from the National Office.

Then, continuing the discussion of publicity by means of radio public service announcements, Dr. Jernigan introduced the latest series of Federation spots. These are being released periodically (the first set was mailed to all radio stations in the spring of 1980), and it was agreed that the second set of NFB spots would be mailed on August 1st. Three of the NFB spots were played during the Presidential Report, and their content and quality brought an enthusiastic response. As with the JOB spots, copies may be secured from the National Office, and each of us must actively work to meet Dr. Jernigan's challenge of "Blanketing the Airwaves with the Federation's positive message." Dr. Jernigan then continued as follows:

I want to say this word about NAC. They met last year in Oklahoma City. They passed a policy statement about us. You read it in the *Monitor*. I guess it is kind of a compliment. I will read it to you. It is not long:

The National Accreditation Council (NAC) believes the present national leadership of the National Federation of the Blind (NFB) to be harmful to the welfare of the blind and visually handicapped persons through its opposition to standards and accreditation.

Well. I'll stop right there and say since when do they presume who our leadership shall be, and beyond that, we have been telling the world they are harmful to the welfare of the blind all along. Nothing new

about this, and they have been saying the same thing about us for years. So going back to their statement:

Therefore, NAC does not recognize the present NFB leadership as a responsible influence in the provision of quality services. NAC reaffirms its commitment to work with all organizations and individuals, including members of the NFB, who support quality services through standards and accreditation.

Approved unanimously at the annual meeting of the NAC Board of Directors assembled November 11, 1979 in Oklahoma City.

Well, good for them. (Applause.)

But, of course, they are trying to use this as if it were a big new policy statement. They are on the run, and they know they are on the run. We are the strongest force in the field of work with the blind, and they know that. Who do they think they are kidding? Anyway, then, NAC met in Boston last week. By the way, if you have not read Dick Johnstone's speech, you ought to read it; it is reprinted in full in the February *Monitor*. What they say is that all they need is more money and more teeth and they will destroy the organized blind movement. These are the people who say they are committed to quality services, and they have gone out and tried to destroy the personal livelihoods of blind individuals. They have tried to destroy Rami Rabby's livelihood. They have tried to destroy others. They have tried to destroy mine. They are now prepared apparently to go state by state to try to destroy every individual that they can. You, some of you, have seen Bob Acosta's so-called fireside chats. In one of those he says unless he and his supporters get some help, and he and his supporters have been offered some from the NAC agencies, that they may not be able to take their case to court. They then did take it

on to court. I am informed, although I do not know, that NAC has given the Acosta people \$10,000 for their legal battles against us. I cannot state that as a fact, but I believe it to be true. I am informed that Richard Bleecker and Peter Salmon met with Acosta (and perhaps Al Jenkins), that there was a deal struck, and that perhaps the California Orientation Center will soon be seeking NAC accreditation. If so, what a commentary on "*quality services*." My! My! My! I can tell you that we are in a war and that they have lots of money, but the field of work with the blind in this country is in flux. One thing that is interesting about this is the fact that Loyal Eugene Apple was "permitted" to resign. (Applause.) We try to have good intelligence sources, so we knew a couple of weeks before he was "permitted" to resign that he was going to be put out. He resigned on a Friday—that is, he called the AFB staff together (I think it was the first Friday in May), and he said that he was resigning. They asked him why he was leaving. Well, he said, he had differences with the Board of the AFB. "What were the differences?" the staff asked him. Well, he said he couldn't discuss those. What was he going to do? He was going back to school, he said, and get another degree. Now, here is a man who is making probably \$60,000 a year, or so, going back to school to get a degree. How long was he going to be around? He was going to be around for a little bit as a consultant—but then, he was going to school. Now, the real reason that he was let go, as we understand it, is that the Foundation's Board of Directors and controlling forces decided that they wanted to go to full war against the NFB—all out war. Apparently Apple decided that he would prefer a softer approach, but the Board decided that he wasn't militant enough. So they decided to let him go.

This brings me to a few comments on events at the spring meeting of National Industries for the Blind. Ralph Sanders attended that meeting, held in San Diego. While there, he mentioned that we knew of Gene Apple's "resignation," and the real reason for it. Apparently the NIB leaders wondered how we knew these things—and they just blew their tops. Joseph Larkin of the NAC Board and Austin Scott of the Dallas Lighthouse for the Blind told Ralph Sanders, as Ralph told it to me, that "We intend to ruin you personally, and we intend to ruin Jernigan personally, and we intend to destroy the NFB, and it will all be done in less than two years. You can count on that." Well, they have tried a long time.

As I say the field of work with the blind is in flux. Rami Rabby, by the way, was contacted by a "talent search" group hired by the Foundation—again, probably spending a good deal of money. That group did not know the politics in the field, or anything, so they came to Rami. (Laughter.) They explained to him a good deal about Apple and the Foundation and why changes were being made. And they said: "Apple is sort of an inside man, and we need an outside man now." Then they asked Rami if he would care to apply for the job. Rami called me up, and I almost had trouble hearing him for his laughter. And he said: "I told the man that I doubt the Foundation would want to keep you on and pay you if you were to turn my name in. Let me tell you who I am." Then he explained to them about being an officer of the Federation. The man got off of it in a hurry. (Laughter.)

There is a new Department of Education as you know. The new Department of Education has Rehabilitation in it. The Commissioner of Rehabilitation has also been allowed to "resign"—one Robert Hum-

phreys. Therefore, they are in the process of finding another Commissioner as you know. There have been indictments in Alabama and Florida at the agencies. Ken Hopkins is gone in Washington. (Applause.) Don Perry, I understand, is resigning in Utah and the workshop is going to be revamped. (Applause.) The Director of the Massachusetts Commission, Marie Matava, is leaving. (Cheers.) A new Director has been appointed in Oregon, and of course I mentioned Brother Seales resigning in Tennessee. But let me not forget that our own Tom Stevens has been made Director in Missouri. (Applause and cheers.)

Our new publications are going well. You must keep circulating those. I won't read you the names of those publications now, but you ought to know them, and you ought to see that they are widely circulated.

We have talked about PAC and Associates; the prizes for the Associates contest will be given Thursday morning. I would say to you that the National Federation of the Blind ended last year, for the first time in several years, with a plus instead of a minus balance financially. (Applause and cheers.) This shows that our work is paying off. But I would also say to you, that would not have happened if we had not received some bequests and other income that we cannot count on as recurring. Jonathan May, as you know, made this organization \$100,000 wealthier last year as a result of his estate and insurance. He did what he could. Jonathan May, even in death, worked for this organization. (Applause.)

The NAC people, by the way, were gnashing their teeth in Boston saying: "How in the world did they get that letter from the NAC Board member that appeared in the *Monitor*." I wondered that myself. (Laughter.)

For details on our March on Washing-

ton, which was the most successful one we have ever had, see the June *Monitor*. Many of you were there. Minimum wage hearings were held May 14 and 15. We were there on May 14th. Congressman Beard is here today with us. He is Chairman of the Subcommittee on Labor Standards. (Applause and cheers.) You should know that the American Council of the Blind in its publication, *The Braille Forum*, attacked Congressman Beard and us because of those hearings. I doubt that the Congressman worries about it, and I am sure that we do not—because we have the numbers and the constituents, and they don't.

There are other things: The Minneapolis Society for the Blind, and how the election was conducted. We will talk about that tomorrow. Court action on that you know about; that is part of last year's history, too. Then there was the *Wall Street Journal* article last fall.

Recently Dorina Nowill, who is head of the World Council for the Welfare of the Blind, visited the National Center. When Dick Edlund and I got through talking to her about minimum wages, I understand she went off and had some talks with the Foundation and NAC about it. She was outraged by it, and they weren't happy with her; so you can see we keep stirring up trouble. You heard talk from Milton Kaye about Independent Living Aids, and what we are doing to compete with the Foundation on its distribution of aids and appliances.

The New Jersey affiliate visited the National Center for the Blind in Baltimore on June 1st. I have told you about our computer. The Helen Keller Congress was a disgrace—but it occurred. It exploited the name of a fine person.

In the spring I was in Eau Claire, Wisconsin, for a meeting of the Wisconsin chapter of the American Association of

Workers for the Blind. There I met one Carl Augusto from NAC—and Oral Miller, President of the American Council of the Blind. This Wisconsin AAWB meeting was a most interesting meeting. Oral Miller was asked about American Council funding, and where it comes from. He responded but he didn't even mention the American Foundation for the Blind as a source. So I got up and said: "Talk about openness, and full disclosure—what about the AFB? Hasn't it provided funding for the Council?" He responded, saying: "The question was not whether we ever got any, it was where are we getting our money right now—and today we are not getting it from the AFB, regardless of what we have got in the past." Further, he said that it was a dirty thing I had done to bring it up. I replied: "Just in the interest of truth." (Laughter.) Carl Augusto was asked about NAC funding, and he said: "Oh, from various corporations." But he didn't even mention the American Foundation for the Blind. I pointed out that the Foundation had provided more than 50% of all NAC's money from the beginning. He did not like that.

We have had seminars at the National Office: Labor Day, Halloween, New Years, Leap Year Weekend. Throughout the rest of the year and during 1981 we are going to have a lot more.

In 1981 you will have a chance to visit the National Center for the Blind because next year's convention will be held in Baltimore. (Applause and cheers.) I would only say to you that somebody called not long ago and asked one of my colleagues: "How is his mental health?" And the person answered: "Well, I don't know, seems about the same as it's always been." When I heard this, I said: "Of course, I don't know either, because if you have bad mental health one of the signs is you don't

know it.” And so I can’t tell you, but I would say this—at least apparently I have not lost the ability to negotiate for convention rates, because in 1981 we will get (in all three of the hotels we had in 1978) convention rates which are \$16 for singles and \$21.50 for doubles and twins. (Applause and cheers.) Let me (and I know we have run late, I couldn’t help that) conclude by saying just this: I intend to work in whatever capacity I can, as hard as I know how to work, in the coming year, if you choose to elect me as President tomorrow, and I have already said that I intend to allow my name to be placed in nomination. If you choose to do that, then I want to say to you this: I have told you year after year

that I don’t believe you elect me to sit back and see if I could make nobody mad at us. I am not trying to make people mad at us, but I believe you elected me to take action and that you would throw me out as quickly if I were passive and took no action as you would if I took the wrong action. To the best of my ability and capacity, if you reelect me, I will lead this organization; I will lead it as strongly as I know how; I will lead it as wisely as I know how; I will be as responsive to what you want me to do as I know how. I want to emphasize this: If you elect me as President, I intend to lead; that is the way it will be. (Applause and cheers.)

### SHELTERED WORKSHOPS—VICTORIES AND CHALLENGES

The discussion concerning sheltered shops was one of the highlights of the NFB convention in Minneapolis this summer. Immediately following the Presidential Report on Tuesday afternoon, we took up matters related to sheltered workshops and the plight of blind people who work in them. The timing of this agenda item was excellent since its placement (immediately following the report by President Jernigan of our finest year of progress yet) emphasized our commitment to win rights and better wages for blind shop workers. The workshop topic was also timely since it came on the heels of our first round of convention combat only a few hours before (see article about Kiwanis Club in September, 1980, *Monitor*) with the Minneapolis Society for the Blind, an agency known nationwide for violations of the Federal labor law in the operation of its sheltered workshop.

With the Kiwanis battle and the Presidential Report as background, audience enthusiasm was at its peak as five speakers

mounted the platform to address the convention on “Sheltered Workshops: Victories and Challenges.” Dr. Jernigan moderated the session. During the course of the discussion we learned of the progress being made to liberate the shop workers from exploitation and abuse. Most significantly, we had an opportunity to hear first-hand from several of the key individuals who are involved at the national level in helping to achieve our goals. Indeed, this was a fitting beginning to our best, most enthusiastic convention yet.

Part of the discussion dealt with the right of blind shop workers to organize collective bargaining units and to have the advantage of representation by labor unions in order to negotiate wages and other terms of employment. Speaking to these points were Bert Bisgyer, an outstanding labor attorney from Baltimore, who has successfully represented our interests in the organizing work on behalf of blind employees at the Cincinnati Association for the Blind and the Light-



house for the Blind of Houston; John Greeley, Director of the National Warehouse Division, International Brotherhood of Teamsters (a valued ally and friend in our unionizing efforts); and William Lubbers, General Counsel for the National Labor Relations Board. Mr. Lubbers holds a key position since he bears the responsibility for securing enforcement of the orders handed down by the National Labor Relations Board, including the Board's orders directing the Cincinnati Association for the Blind and the Lighthouse for the Blind of Houston to bargain with their blind employees. Also speaking on the panel were: Darryl J. Anderson, Counsel for the Committee on Labor and Human Resources of the United States Senate, and Congressman Edward P. Beard, Chairman of the Subcommittee on Education and Labor of the United States House of Representatives. The following are excerpts from the convention presentation concerning collective bargaining and the plight of sheltered shop employees:

**From Bert N. Bisgyer, Labor Relations Attorney**

"I'm very proud to be here this afternoon and I would like to thank you, Dr. Jernigan, for inviting me to address the convention today. This is quite an honor for me.

"I come before you this afternoon to report on the status of the Cincinnati and Houston cases and the status of the blind workers' labor movement. We have certainly come a long way since Dr. Jernigan first detailed the need for decisive action to improve working conditions in sheltered shops and while we are still far away from our goal, I truly believe that we will soon see the passing of an era of unchecked agency exploitation of workers that has had few rivals in this century. (Applause.) I make

this optimistic prediction today because the Federation has finally convinced the National Labor Relations Board of the rightness of the workers' cause, while forever exploding the myth that workshops are paternalistic entities. At Cincinnati and Houston we have also exposed agency workshop operations for precisely what they are: profit-oriented businesses that rely on blind labor to generate production revenues period. (Applause.) I would report to you today that the National Labor Relations Board has now taken the position that workshops will no longer automatically be exempt from its jurisdiction and that their workers will no longer be denied the right to be represented by a union, simply because their employing agency claims to be 'for' the blind. (Applause.) It seems that the Federal government is finally learning what Federationists and workshop employees have long known; that agencies which profess to be for the blind usually are not. (Applause and cheers.)

"Let us chance to let our guard down at this point, however, I would state that the legal battle is far from over. It has only switched arenas from the Labor Board to the Federal Appellate Courts and as the stakes increase, we should not be surprised to learn that our old adversaries, NIB (National Industries for the Blind) and NAC (National Accreditation Council for Agencies Serving the Blind and Visually Handicapped) have joined the fight committing their substantial resources to support the workshop industry's plan to divide and scare blind workers by doomsday prophecies, threats, and less subtle tactics; to make workers dependent, to keep their compensation substandard and now to take away their long-awaited right to vote for union representation.

"While our immediate focus of concern is winning Houston and Cincinnati in the

Federal Courts, you should note closely that the Labor Board's decisions in those cases has far broader application and indeed potentially affects most workshop employees around the nation. This is because the Labor Board has now decided to extend organizational rights to workshop employees wherever two basic conditions are met. The first is that the workshop be commercially oriented to an extent that business considerations, not rehabilitative ones, predominate. The second is wherever workshop management treats its workers as employees in their basic condition of employment. Now the NLRB will continue to adhere to this position regardless of the outcome of Houston and Cincinnati in the Courts and it will do so unless and until the Supreme Court of the United States tells it to stop." (Applause.)

Mr. Bisgyer went on to summarize the status of the cases now in the Federal courts involving the Lighthouse for the Blind of Houston and the Cincinnati Association for the Blind; see the July/August, 1980, *Monitor* for this update. With respect to Cincinnati, briefs have now been filed, and Mr. Bisgyer outlined some of the not too surprising arguments being used by management as a defense. Mr. Bisgyer continued as follows:

"It is altogether fitting that the blind workers' labor movement should direct its attention to Cincinnati because the movement's most recent chapter really began at the CAB workshop and this employer (an NIB member and NAC accredited agency to boot) stands for everything that is antithetical to civilized labor relations in the United States. (Applause.)

"In this regard I would pass on to you a few of the more choice arguments the CAB has made to this Court, and with a straight face; not only for their entertainment value, but more important because they under-

score what we are up against. The CAB first asked the Court to strike the Labor Board's assertion of jurisdiction because (in the CAB's classic words) it has a very special relationship with its workers. (Laughter.)

"Well, I am going to detail a little bit for your benefit just how this special relationship looks from the worker's perspective. It features some of the most disgraceful wages in the history of the United States of America which at the time of the hearing ranged down to fifty-eight cents per hour. That's \$23.20 per week for forty hours of hard, factory labor. This special relationship also features the now infamous work evaluation unit, a punishment room with bars on the windows where, we are told, bad blind workers are sent to have their attitudes improved. (Laughter.) This special relationship also boasts a pitiful fringe benefit package which in 1980 doesn't even include a health or a medical plan. But most incredible of all, CAB benefit policy deliberately discriminates against blind workers, denying them a pension while offering them an inferior vacation pay package from that which is made available to sighted workers who also get a pension plan. At Christmas time, when the CAB puts on a Santa Claus suit and remembers its workers, you know how it does it? It does it with a special extension cord or a special box of candy. Merry Christmas. (Laughter.)

"Now this special relationship also includes such additional extras as no seniority rights, no job bidding rights, no job security, no daily overtime, no cost-of-living, no merit increases and a compensation scheme that guarantees only to sighted workers at the CAB a minimum hourly wage while guaranteeing blind workers nothing but unrealistically low and pathetic piece rates. As they say, the only one who makes out at

the CAB workshop is the CAB itself. (Applause.)

"Let there be no mistake about this. The only workshop-related service that is provided at the CAB is the hard, industrial labor that its workers provide that agency every day, Monday through Friday, forty hours a week, fifty-two weeks a year.

"We are hopeful that the Court will not be fooled by such transparent arguments, but that it will recognize that the CAB is simply making one last desperate attempt to avoid the obvious implications of its business and labor practices. In the final analysis the very crux of the CAB's position and that of its industry supporters is summed up by its now classic observation: 'Blind persons must have reasonably repetitive work in order to perform it.' (Boos.)

"This better than anything we can say has exposed the CAB's position for what it is: Reactionary philosophy that is based on an incredibly low view of blind people and its economic self-interest. You have heard the arguments, and you know where we stand.

"We can and will win these cases if the Courts decide them on the basis of what these agencies do and not what they say. To accomplish this, as I see it, the Courts must come to understand two simple facts. The first is that it is pure foolishness for workshops to derogate the employment capabilities and status of the very workers on whom they daily rely to produce products for profit. The second is that workshops have a huge economic stake in maintaining the status quo and absolutely no interest, no desire, and no incentive in seeing their well-trained and productive work force move into private industry, much less competitive business. If the Courts can reach these understandings, to borrow a phrase from Dr. Jernigan, they will surely know where we have been, where we are going, and why we will never turn back."

**From John J. Greeley, Director, National Warehouse Division, International Brotherhood of Teamsters**

"I am most happy to be here with you today. I know I am among friends. In my labor management responsibilities as a representative of the Teamsters I often liken my contacts with certain employers to being surrounded by turkeys, but being here today I know I soar with eagles and I thank you for inviting me. By the way I came into town last night, I registered across the street at the Curtis Hotel because Dick (NFB Treasurer Richard Edlund) was there. I talked to him later on last evening and this morning I met with him and our attorney, Bert, and Bert suggested we go across the street to eat our breakfast. But Dick wouldn't let us because I suppose he was thinking of the last time that I met with you at your convention two years ago. I had taken my car over from Washington to Baltimore to meet with Bert and with Dick and I had found no place to park and I parked the car, double parked it, in front of Bert's office. Went upstairs and met with Bert and I met with Dick and we came downstairs and we found a place to park and don't you know I had Dick and Bert get out of the car, I got out myself, left the keys in it, locked the door and left the motor running. (Laughter.) What a situation. It was the first time that I realized for sure what the Congressman has just said, that there is nobody in this room handicapped. (Laughter.) There wasn't a soul in Baltimore that could open the door so I could get my key and turn off the motor except Dick Edlund. (Laughter and applause.) And I have a very strong feeling that when Bert wanted to go across the street this morning from the Curtis Hotel to a restaurant to eat that Dick wouldn't let me go because he was very fearful that I was going to have some kind of accident while I crossed the

street because I guess I am that kind of a guy.” (Laughter.)

After these introductory remarks, Mr. Greeley set the stage further by tracing the history and advancement of the organized labor movement in this country, emphasizing the advantage of collective action in dealing with employers. Then, coming squarely to the matter of immediate concern to the organized blind, he stated:

“Now we come to the difference between the sighted and the sightless, and this difference should end forever, for all time, the expectation that compassion permeates the ranks of American business. We find, as you so well know, that employers daily exploit the fact that your vision is gone or impaired. Forget the lip service in such cruel and demeaning slogans as ‘hire the handicapped.’ Forget the veneer of the President’s Committee on Hiring the Handicapped. (Applause.) Concentrate your efforts on the cruel fact that if an employer sees a difference in workers he is going to exploit it. How sinister a name like ‘sheltered workshop!’ How economically insane a premise that the resources of the blind are not mainstreamed into America’s productive process in a meaningful way. How gross a Federal management policy which does not address the exploitation of the blind in any meaningful way. . . .

“So I am saying to you today that the white cane of hope, as I see it, lies in forgetting your difference (however difficult that may be) and in realizing that through union association there is strength. The battle of the blacks for an equal place under the American sun still goes on. Women in the job market are struggling for the same equality. . . . You who are blind must accept the common bond with other workers. That is, if you attempt to deal with employers as individuals, you will be exploited badly. If you are determined to deal with

employers collectively, you will find that your bargaining strength is greatly enhanced. And you will find something else: even union membership will not be an overnight salvation. It wasn’t for white workers who fought the company goons in the picket lines in the early ‘30’s. It isn’t for the black who still experiences the highest unemployment rate and who still finds it necessary to sell towels in the men’s room. It isn’t for women in the work place who labor for less and only dream of the right to advancement. Yes, there are differences, but they are only differences in kind. Goals can be achieved depending on how high you want to reach and my advice to you today is to reach as high as you possibly can. Apples on the lower limbs may be easy to pluck, but the greatest rewards or fruits from your labor require that you reach one of the highest goals which in my opinion is membership in a strong and viable union, which will say to an employer: don’t exploit the differences. Hire the people who are important to America’s productive process. Mainstream them into the productive process and pay them a fair day’s wage for a fair day’s work. (Applause and cheers.)

“Now, Dr. Jernigan, I want to say something directly to you. I listened to your report. You know if you ever became a member of the Teamsters, you would be elected as a member of our Executive Board! (Laughter.) You sounded just like a Teamster member. All the rest of you, the way you’re performing, I have to think that you would make great Teamsters, and I sincerely hope that one of these days you and I and Dick can sit down and say we are all members of the great International Brotherhood of Teamsters because we deserve to be.”

**From William A. Lubbers, General Counsel,  
National Labor Relations Board**

“I think that the thing you want to hear

the most is that the Board is going to win the Cincinnati Association for the Blind case. I think we will. (Applause.) But it is always dangerous to predict Court opinions; and it is by no means, it seems to me, an absolute sure shot."

Mr. Lubbers then recited some of the history of union organizing efforts in sheltered workshops and reviewed the evolution of the National Labor Relations Board policies in this area. An important question relates to the Board's assertion of jurisdiction over non-profit organizations in general, and Mr. Lubbers explained that part of the Court challenge by the Cincinnati Association will go to this point. Further, Mr. Lubbers identified the Cincinnati Association for the Blind's business activity and the employment relationship with the workers as critical factors in the case before the Court.

"In the Court of Appeals," he said "(and the Cincinnati Association for the Blind case is now in the Sixth Circuit) the briefs have been filed. There the question will be in part whether the Board has been true to its own standards set forth in the Goodwill Industries of Southern California case and whether or not there is truly a distinction between these two cases. I think the record does support the Board's findings of a distinction and in that situation I think that the likelihood is that the Court will affirm the Board; but as I said before, there is always a possibility that anyone who tries to predict a Court is wrong. If the Board prevails in the Sixth Circuit then I would suspect quite strongly (and if I hadn't suspected it before I would suspect it from what I heard here today) that the employer will take this case up to the Supreme Court or attempt to get Supreme Court review. Whether or not it will be able to do this I do not know. The issue is an important one—it is certainly an important one to the

employees in that case—but it is important also for its impact upon the Board's general approach now to non-profit corporations and organizations and its jurisdictional policies with respect to them. So it's possible that the Supreme Court might grant review and if the Board loses, I would guess that the Board itself would take this or some other case up to the Supreme Court for review, too. So perhaps the fight is not over yet." (Applause.)

And, indeed, the fight (as Mr. Lubbers put it) is not yet over, for along with our efforts to secure collective bargaining rights in the sheltered workshops, we have also worked hard to improve wages for shop workers, focusing specifically on the objective of achieving protection of at least the Federal minimum wage. As with almost anything that is truly worth doing, the battle has been long and tough, but the progress has also been rewarding and positive. While we have not yet reached the full minimum wage for all blind workers, we are closer to it than we have ever been before, and we are now on track toward real breakthroughs in the months and years just ahead. Some indication of the progress we have made is to be found in the nationwide public exposure given to the issue of the low pay in sheltered workshops, but even more significant, we have finally caught the ear of people in policy making positions, and they are hearing our message that blind people are tired of second-class treatment in our nation's work force.

**Remarks and Dialogue: President Jernigan and Darryl J. Anderson, Counsel, Committee on Labor and Human Resources, United States Senate**

Two speakers on the Tuesday afternoon program addressed the issues of wages in sheltered workshops. They were Darryl J. Anderson, speaking from his position as

Counsel for the Committee on Labor and Human Resources, United States Senate, and the Honorable Edward P. Beard, Chairman of the Subcommittee on Labor Standards, Committee on Education and Labor, United States House of Representatives.

Mr. Anderson, speaking as a key congressional staffer working in the area of fair labor standards legislation, shared his own personal perspective on the struggle for minimum wage and offered his assessment of the practical obstacles before us in passing minimum wage legislation. Later, in a dialogue with President Jernigan, the question of impediments (especially the matter of who represents the views of the blind) was explored in some depth. Excerpts from Mr. Anderson's remarks and the dialogue follow:

*Mr. Anderson:* "It seems to me that the validity of the proposition that blind people are fully capable of fully productive employment and should earn the minimum wage as the barest minimum is self-evident. This means that the sheltered workshop program, as it currently exists, results in unequal and in many cases unfair treatment. On the way here on the airplane I read testimony by proponents of subminimum wages who characterized them in various ways as special wages. Rather than substantial wages, they were 'special wages.' It brought to mind something that Leslie Milk, who is the Director of Mainstream, Inc., said in another context: 'We are always told that we are special—special education, special programs, special legislation to protect our rights. But growing up handicapped in America, I learned what *special* meant and I tried to get unspecial every way I could.' (Laughter and applause.) *Special* means *separate*, and as the Courts said, *separate* can never be equal. (Applause.)

"On the political level the second point is there are some rather substantial impediments,

as I see it, to progress in this area. Not the least of these problems is the split within the blind community itself over the best course to follow and I've heard a fair number of mentions of that split today and you know it's a problem. Now the National Federation of the Blind is the leading and the most vigorous and effective advocate for your rights, (applause) but it's not the only advocacy group that is seen to represent the interests of blind workers. There is in fact a veritable 'alphabet soup' of other organizations which have some legitimate constituencies and which are perceived as legitimate, some of whose leaders I know and have come to like and respect in many ways. But there is a disharmony between those groups and this group. And you are the leaders, but you need to end that disharmony if you can—and work together if you can. To put it more bluntly, the political persuasive force of the employer community is likely to make it difficult for you to obtain your goals unless you can work together. Now the National Federation of the Blind has never been criticized for being moderate (laughter); and some of the other groups have. In your discussion with them, I suggest that you say to them what Dr. Martin Luther King said to some people who were moderates when he was perceived to be a radical in the early days of the civil rights struggle in the '60's. They said to him: 'It's too soon to do the things that you want to do.' Slow down, they argued. 'The time just isn't yet right to do the things that you say need to be done.' To these pleas Dr. King had the following response: 'Now is the time. The time is always right to do right.' (Cheers and applause.) Above all, Dr. King said: 'We ain't going to let nobody turn us around.' (Cheers and applause.)

"Finally I want to mention another category of a broader nature of a political problem. It seems to me that your struggle for

equality and fair treatment is part of a much broader struggle that has been going on since before your struggle really began to be effective as it is now. In particular you're not alone in your fight for the right to bargain collectively or in the fight for a full minimum wage."

Mr. Anderson compared the minimum wage for the blind to the struggle by farm workers for the minimum wage. He said that they are perceived as being different. He said that although some economists have argued that minimum wage for everyone causes some unemployment, this is not generally agreed upon. Mr. Anderson then continued:

"The true role of the minimum wage in basic fact is that it speaks through Federal law for those who are still trying to organize to speak for themselves, who haven't yet organized, who don't have the strength, don't have the unity to demand what by right is theirs. A decent standard of living with decent working conditions and the minimum wage is necessary and essential for those people while they're getting organized to insure that there is a floor below which employers cannot drive wages. That's the role of the minimum wage and it's an important one." (Applause.)

*Dr. Jernigan:* "These panelists keep telling me they have got to leave, but I want Mr. Anderson to stay for a minute and hear one thing. Look, you said, Mr. Anderson, that we are like farm workers in the sense that we have certain problems and you detail those. I would urge you not to fall for the very thing that you are urging us not to fall for. Let me tell you what I mean by that. There is not a whole alphabet soup of advocacy organizations of blind people. Now, facts are facts, and let's deal with facts. All of us in this field are not all working for the same thing and we are not going to all get together and there's no point in our playing

games with you about it. (Applause and cheers.) Let me say what I mean by that. The facts are (let's not talk about hypothetical situations and games) that there are three and only three organizations that pretend in any way to be nationwide organizations of blind people in this country—and that is the truth. Those are the National Federation of the Blind, with about 50,000 plus members; the American Council of the Blind, the group that broke away from us and is much smaller than we are; and the Blind Veterans Association, with probably 1,000 or 1,500 members—and many of those are members of our organization. The American Council of the Blind is largely co-opted by the agencies doing work for the blind. But what I'm really getting to is when you talk about the alphabet soup, what you're really doing is the same thing that somebody would be if they said, look you people in the automobile industry: Good Lord, can't you see what's happening to Chrysler? You've got UAW. You've got Chrysler. You've got General Motors. You've got American Motors. You've got Volkswagen. You've got all kinds of things. Why can't all you people (you're all working for the same thing—you're all in the same business) get together now? Well, of course, the answer to that is you don't have five or six or seven or ten—you have two, and that's the truth. UAW: It represents the workers. The other groups all represent management. OK. If you're talking about the American Foundation for the Blind, you are also talking about the National Accreditation Council. You are also talking about the management of workshops. You are also talking about most of the other agencies doing work with the blind—all interlocked into a single force. It's alright if we can't get together on whether or not the Congress or somebody else will support us—let's get the facts straight. The facts

are that all of these so called 'different groups' are not organizations of the blind and the facts are (applause) that they are working very often at opposite purposes from what we are, in that many of them are trying to line their pockets with profits and that we are fighting to try to get wages for the workers. Now how in the world can we get together with groups when what we're trying to do, for instance, is get the minimum wage and they're trying to stop us from doing it? We just can't." Dr. Jernigan then said: "Here is Mr. Anderson to respond to that."

*Mr. Anderson:* "Well, I think Dr. Jernigan's point (as his other points were) was made very well and very forcefully and it's very true. The point is that you have to get them to join you. You are the leaders."

*Dr. Jernigan:* "OK, but come on! You can't get General Motors to join the UAW. Come on man."

*Mr. Anderson:* "The other organizations that do purport (you say what?) There are two or three organizations that do represent workers?"

*Dr. Jernigan:* "I'm saying to you that there are only three groups in this country that *claim* even to be nationwide organizations of the blind. I'm saying that one of them we have no problem with at all and I'm saying that the other one, the ACB, has been taken over lock, stock, and barrel and bought and paid for by the agencies. They are a company union, man. We can't—"

*Mr. Anderson:* "They'll never join you. Forget it."

*Dr. Jernigan:* "No, they won't. (Cheers and applause.) We want you to know that we appreciate your coming, Mr. Anderson. The very value of having you here is so that we can hear you and get your perspective and you can hear us and get ours—and that's why we're appreciative of your

being here. We thank you for hearing and responding." (Applause and cheers.)

### **From Congressman Edward P. Beard, Chairman, Subcommittee on Labor, United States House of Representatives**

The high point of the session on sheltered workshops came when Representative Edward P. Beard of Rhode Island addressed the convention, speaking from his powerful position as Chairman of the Subcommittee in the House of Representatives through which any legislation regarding wages and labor standards must pass before it can be considered further. During his short tenure as Chairman of the Subcommittee, Congressman Beard has shown himself to be a person of sensitivity and fairness. Moreover, he knows the difference between management and labor, and he understands the distinction between "*for* the blind" and "*of* the blind." Last spring he had a real chance to become better educated on this and other key points as he chaired two days of hearings, listening to the bosses from the workshops, who were trying to explain what was good for the blind. The July/August *Monitor* contains a complete account, including significant testimony presented at the hearings.

There is no question that those hearings (coupled with the opportunity which Mr. Beard had to meet less formally with the delegates attending the convention) left, as he himself put it, a deep and lasting impression. This was obvious to all as he stepped to the podium to deliver the following remarks:

"Mr. President, distinguished members of the head table, panelists, and ladies and gentlemen: A week or so ago my staff prepared a speech. I very seldom ever go by a prepared text. They prepared a speech they thought was appropriate for this occasion. It might have been until I arrived. When I



arrived here in Minnesota last night, I had a chance to talk to some of you people here in the audience about some of the problems that you have faced in the past and face today and probably will face tomorrow for a while. The speech was designated for people who have a handicap. But I found out one thing in the short period of time that I have been here at this convention: There is no one in this room with a handicap. (Cheers.) The only handicap (or maybe the only handicapped people) are not here. They are the men and women in Washington and elsewhere that keep throwing road blocks up in front of you that make the handicap. You're not handicapped. As a matter of fact, the prepared speech that I have here today probably would have been a good speech down the corridor for the Kiwanis. (Cheers.) Not so much for the Kiwanis, but for those who oppose this organization.

"Briefly I want to speak about a friend of mine in Rhode Island, a lawyer. When he was a young lawyer, he had an accident and lost his eyesight. He later went on to become the Attorney General of the State of Rhode Island. He served on every Court in my state (including the Supreme Court), and he was blind. Now, could you imagine someone telling him that he shouldn't get the minimum wage! (Cheers.)

"We heard in the various commercials (he refers here to the JOB radio announcements) that will be played around the country about the various people that are working with all sorts of skills—doctors, lawyers, blue collar and white collar professions and trades. Last night I heard a gentleman from Utah talk about the skills he had acquired since 1953 making brooms as a blue collar worker—but unfortunately he is not receiving minimum wage. I heard another worker also with a lot of longevity, who was making something like \$1.50 per

hour. That should not happen in America! It should not happen. (Applause.)

"Eddie Beck's name was mentioned from Rhode Island. Eddie is the former President of the NFB of Rhode Island. Eddie Beck is respected in Rhode Island. Certainly it would be an insult to him if he were to get a job and they said, 'all you are worth is less than the minimum wage.'

"What I am saying to you is this: I was lucky first of all to arrive in the Congress. Maybe some would say I might have had a handicap, possibly, because I had no money. I came as a blue collar worker. I was a housepainter that got elected. I had \$9,000 against \$150,000 the first election that I won. But I was also lucky enough to become the youngest Chairman in the history of the House of Representatives (in the Labor Committee), and I have the jurisdiction in the House on minimum wage. We had hearings this year (applause) on minimum wage; and I kind of figure when it was all said and done that individually today and yesterday and last night—talking to you people—I figured we are certainly going to have a markup shortly. It may not be this Congress, but next Congress, on the upgrading of the salary even from where it is today in minimum wage to a higher level. I kind of feel in that process that it will be time then to include the blind in the mainstream of our society and make sure that the blind get minimum wage. (Cheers and applause.)

"You know your organization has maybe a lot of things in common with my own organization—but one thing we certainly have in common: I understand in 1940 this organization was born. So was I born in 1940. My organization started.

"As I said earlier, I am very proud—and I am proud of my blue collar background—but it is also an honor that I have this opportunity to make my presentation to you,

especially in this particular state. In this hall many years ago a young mayor of this city, a fellow named Hubert Humphrey, Jr., gave many good speeches. (Applause.) He was a true friend of the poor, a true friend of labor. And in 1977 (somewhere here in Minnesota at the AFL-CIO Convention) he made this statement: 'The history of the Labor Movement needs to be taught in every school in this land. America is a living testimony to what free men and women organized in a free democracy in trade unions can do to make life better. We ought to be proud of it. You have every reason to be proud of your organization.' (Applause.) Let me tell you another thing. I am sure if Humphrey were standing here he would tell you this: Don't ever believe that you're a nobody, because you're a somebody! Don't ever believe that! And don't believe that you're handicapped, because you're not! The only ones who are handicapped are those who put the obstacles in front of you, that make it difficult for your lives. And another thing that you have to do—it's part of the process—if you're not registered to vote, get registered; and you make sure you vote. (Applause.) And there is another thing. When there is legislation before the Congress that affects the elderly, that affects the working man, that affects your causes and others, don't *think* about it—get down and *do* something about it. Don't *talk* about it. Write to the members of Congress, the House and the Senate. Show up in the Congress when you can. And when this minimum wage comes up next year, I want to see a parade to Washington! (Applause and cheers.) When that bus takes off from your state, don't be left at the bus station. You get on, and you come to Washington—because that is what it's going to take. You show the members of Congress (you show the House members, and you show my committee

members) that you want what every citizen has. Many of you (maybe through an accident) became blind, but prior to that many of you fought in wars, World War II (some of you older ones might have been in World War I), Korea, and Vietnam. Don't settle for anything less than what everyone else gets, because you *are* everyone. There is nothing special about you, and no one should feel sorry for you—but those people in power (and I happen to have a position of power) should understand that if someone is getting short changed, do something about it; and I will. (Applause.)

"Now I am going to close. As I was saying, there is a lot of work—very sincerely there is an awful lot of work that has to be done. This is the greatest country in the world. Let me close with this. I have never read in any newspaper or listened to any news report or ever witnessed anything on television that this organization brought any disgrace to this country. We are all Americans. Some of us are rich; some of us are poor. But we are proud Americans. You help me next year when I return to the Congress. None of you can vote for me with the exception of a few here from Rhode Island, but you help me when I return to Congress; and I promise you I will be the Pied Piper and lead the way on this minimum wage in the House of Representatives." (Tumultuous applause and cheers.)

Congressman Beard's speech was a climax. This was truly an afternoon of excitement—or, as some may put it, "One of the finest days in the entire history of our movement." In keeping with the good spirit of the occasion, Federationists from Cincinnati showed their appreciation to all of us by honoring NFB Treasurer Richard Edlund with a plaque to remember the organizing campaign at the CAB. Margaret

White, a shop worker at the Cincinnati Association, expressed in her own words the feelings of the group:

"I have just a little token to give to Dick Edlund, because he helped us organize in Cincinnati, Ohio, and it was just a wonderful job that he did in helping us to organize. And also, we thank all you Federationists for what you did to help us, and God bless everyone." (Shouts from the audience, "We're with you!" Cheers and applause.)

### CONVENTION POST SCRIPT

It seems somehow fitting that as we met in Minneapolis on Tuesday afternoon, July 1, to consider the plight of blind workers in sheltered workshops, and as we heard from key Federal officials (including the Chairman of the Subcommittee having responsibility for legislation which establishes wage standards), the U.S. Department of Labor in Washington was announcing that a new program (characterized as an "experiment") would soon begin, with the objective of bringing all blind workers to full

minimum wage at the end of four years. During this four year period, there will be gradual increases, which will mean almost immediate improvement in wages for hundreds of blind people who work in the sheltered shops. This decision was the outgrowth of the petition which we filed in early 1979, calling for full minimum wage protection for the blind. (Perhaps we ought to be surprised—but, somehow, we are not—that Durward McDaniel, the representative of the American Council of the Blind, showed up at the Labor Department meeting at which the decision was announced to oppose increased wages for the blind. How can any blind person feel that the ACB is truly a consumer organization and not merely a tool of the reactionary agencies!) The verdict is now in, and while it does not give us everything we sought, it represents an important step in the right direction. (See the *Monitor* for more details as they are announced by the Department of Labor.) We are truly on the move, and we will not go back.

### U. S. DEPARTMENT OF LABOR RULING MEANS PROGRESS TOWARD FULL MINIMUM WAGE FOR THE BLIND

by JAMES GASHEL

In February of 1979 we asked the Secretary of Labor to establish new limits on granting all employers (including sheltered workshops) certificates of exemption from the minimum wage requirement of the Fair Labor Standards Act. This was done by means of a formal petition filed under the authority of the Federal Administrative Procedures Act. Under this act, any citizen or group has the right to petition for changes in Federal rules and policy. A description of the arguments contained in our

minimum wage petition can be found in the *Braille Monitor*, March, 1979.

Once a petition of this type has been filed, the Federal agency involved (in this case the Department of Labor—DOL) must consider the merits of the petitioner's request and rule one way or another. While it has always been our hope to secure a legislative mandate for full minimum wage for the blind, we decided to proceed with administrative action in the form of a rule-making petition, since it seemed that the

statute permitting subminimum wages (Sec. 14(c) of the Fair Labor Standards Act) vested sufficient discretionary authority in the Secretary of Labor to allow for requiring minimum wage when it could be justified. In light of all of the evidence now emerging about wage practices in sheltered workshops, we felt a good case could be made, so we filed the petition, hoping that it would be fruitful, but realizing that the long-range solution lies in legislation.

DOL's handling of this petition, and indeed the final decision itself, attests to our growing strength and effectiveness as a movement. Only a few years ago a request of this type to the Secretary of Labor would largely have been ignored, or even worse, laughed at. "After all," everyone would have said, "the law is the law, and you can't change that." But today we have come to be a respected people's movement with a well-known cause that is just; so upon receiving our petition for minimum wage for the blind, the Department of Labor took major steps to give all possible consideration to the merits of our position. Among these steps were three days of public hearings, held at the DOL headquarters in Washington, D.C., in June of 1979, and solicitation of more general public comment by means of a notice in the Federal Register. A substantial volume of comment was received (on balance favorable to our position), and the hearings attracted a good deal of attention, with approximately 15 supporting statements being filed by members of the Congress. Representative Raymond Lederer (Democrat of Pennsylvania) appeared at the hearings in person to present his supporting statement.

So this petition was not ignored, and now we have a decision. By letter dated May 27, 1980, DOL advised us that the petition, itself, would not be granted because of the belief that the Fair Labor

Standards Act does not contain sufficient authority for the Secretary of Labor to withhold certificates of exemption in the case of blind or visually impaired workers. Furthermore, the precise impact (in terms of the possibility that employment opportunities for the blind would be limited) was characterized as uncertain. In view of these considerations, DOL chose to take a less direct approach than we called for in the petition, while still accepting the arguments that there are substantial weaknesses in the subminimum wage certification system as it has existed. Consequently, the method developed was described as an "experiment" in the impact of gradually increasing the wages of blind workers in order to bring them up to the minimum wage over a four year period.

The exact form and conditions of this experimental program are not generally known or fully understood at this point, but DOL officials announced the broad outline of it to the public at a meeting in Washington on the afternoon of July 1, precisely at the moment when, at the NFB convention in Minneapolis, we were considering minimum wage and other matters related to sheltered workshops—the timing seemed more than incidentally appropriate. At this point, as we understand it, the experimental program will not commence any earlier than January, 1981. The exact beginning date has not been announced or even determined by DOL.

When it does begin, blind or visually impaired workers will be paid no less than 70% of the minimum wage, with periodic increases which will bring wages up to the minimum wage within four years. Blind workers who begin work later than the starting date of the program will receive no less than 50% of the minimum, with periodic increases which will bring them up to the minimum wage at a later time. Positive

as this may sound, there are substantial loopholes in the plan. For example, employers will be allowed to receive an exemption for certain workers on an individual basis when they can justify it to DOL's wage and hour compliance officers. Furthermore, it appears that workers who are being paid on individual certificates at rates below 50% of the minimum wage will generally not realize increases as a result of this program, although DOL will more closely monitor the wages being paid to these workers to be sure that employers are not simply trying to evade the requirements of this new program. Perhaps the most perplexing and troubling weakness of all is that the workers who will benefit from this program are those who are blind, without other handicaps which impair productivity. This has always been a sticky point, for many of the workshops will argue that all of their workers are "multiply handicapped." As we go to press with this issue of the *Monitor*, we are currently in the process of discussing this and other troublesome issues with policy making officials at DOL, and we are hopeful that every effort will be made to curb abuse.

Thus, despite these pitfalls in the program and the challenges they pose for us, DOL's decision on our petition represents an overall positive development in favor of improving wages for blind shop workers, as well as for the few blind people who work in competitive industry on subminimum wages. The important thing is that we have at last achieved tangible recognition that the subminimum wage practices are often unfair to productive blind workers and that requiring certain increases can be justified. Establishing this principle is a big step in the right direction. Just how big can be seen in the furiously negative reaction of workshop management groups, such as National Industries for the Blind

(NIB). One DOL official indicated recently that, as soon as the start-up date for the program is announced, the Department anticipates being sued by NIB—to which we responded (although it is a strange turn of events) we may consider joining the case in support of the DOL position. How the times do change.

But no matter how much things change, some facts of life will always stay the same. One of the sure bets you can make is that the American Council of the Blind will always be found shuffling along, following the lead of the most reactionary agencies and elements in the field of work with the blind. Indeed, let there be no mistake about the distinction between organizations—we're not all working for the same thing. In the August, 1980 issue of the Council's publication (*The Braille Forum*) this is clear for all to read. In that issue, in an article entitled, "DOL Decides Minimum Wage Issue for Blind Workers," written by the ACB national representative, Durward K. McDaniel, DOL's decision is described with several statements (in the nature of an editorial comment) as follows:

The stated reason for the experiment is to find out if arbitrary increases in pay will cause blind workers to produce more. The DOL proposes that each employer would absorb the wage increase without financial help from DOL. No answer was given to a question asked about termination of employment of blind workers who would be part of the experiment. The DOL annually issues subminimum wage certificates to qualifying employers, permitting the payment of less than the minimum wage to handicapped workers based on their productivity. Presumably, DOL could be thinking of withholding such certificates as a coercive lever to obtain 'volunteers' for its experiment. DOL admittedly does not know how many blind workers would be affected by the experiment.

In any event, it appears that DOL may attempt to do by experiment what it says it lacks the legal authority to do by rule and regulations, namely, require the payment of the minimum wage to blind workers, but only to those who have no other handicap.

Mr. McDaniel goes on to say:

This writer believes that the DOL is merely shadowboxing around the law which cannot be changed without a Congressional amendment.

So says Durward McDaniel, speaking for the American Council of the Blind. What a commentary! What a petulant, sulky reaction! What a sellout—abusing the Department of Labor for requiring better wages for the blind. There is simply no other way to read this editorial comment. Let us hear no more talk about how the ACB is a legitimate representative of the views of blind people. A company union is just that—a company union: no more, no less. And the words of its national representative prove it. As one DOL official put it when asked how he could explain Mr.

McDaniel's reaction to the new program unveiled at the July 1 meeting: "I guess his group is just not for paying the blind better wages, that's what I got from his remarks."

We will circulate more details about the DOL experiment as soon as we have them. It will be especially critical to alert shop workers to the required increases in wages and when this will begin. The workshop bosses are bound to try to use every loophole possible, so we must be prepared to defend individual workers wherever it is necessary to do so.

Summed up, we have now reached a new plateau in our quest for full and equal status as blind people in America, but a challenge is still before us. Getting what we deserve will depend on our vigilance and strength as a movement, but we have an abundance of both; let us not be held back or pushed aside. Let the ACB apologize and dance to the tune of the agencies all it wants, but we the blind know what we want and where we are headed in the future.

### **THE ELDERLY BLIND AND THE PLAIN BROWN WRAPPER AN ADDRESS DELIVERED JULY 3, 1980 AT THE CONVENTION OF THE NATIONAL FEDERATION OF THE BLIND**

by GERALD M. KASS, EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT  
JEWISH BRAILLE INSTITUTE OF AMERICA, NEW YORK, NY

President Jernigan, Fellow Federationists

Mazel Tov!

For those to whom those words are unfamiliar let me explain—they are Hebrew in origin and simply mean—Good Luck!

These words are said on all joyous occasions, births, graduations, anniversaries, bar mitzvahs, weddings and to mark successful achievements.

This is the Federation's 40th Annual

Convention. A great milestone marking both success and achievement, a relocation of the epic-center of the history of blind people.

In Hebrew literature—the Bible specifically—the number 40 is attached to special periods of time.

—The Israelites spent 40 years in the desert between Pharaoh's Egypt and free nationhood

—Moses sojourned on the mountain for 40 days before bringing down the law.

So has the NFB convened for 40 years, reaching its maturity, proclaiming its message of deliverance, preparing its people for their destiny and taking upon itself and its membership the God-given role for which it was created.

Again

Mazel Tov! — you deserve it.

When President Jernigan invited me once again to address this convention, an opportunity I cherish and an invitation I warmly welcome, I knew what I wanted to talk about but not quite how to say it. He was kind enough to give me a few days to let him know how my talk might be listed in the convention program... Thus emerged the title, "The Elderly Blind and the Plain Brown Wrapper," because of the following experience that came to mind.

Several months ago I received a phone call in my office from a woman who had heard of a new publication that had been issued by the Jewish Braille Institute. It was a daily prayer book in large print. Both the English and Hebrew texts had been uniformly reset in bulletin size type specifically to meet the needs of people with usable yet extremely limited vision, most of whom are legally blind. The woman began by telling me that she had a *friend* who was interested in obtaining a copy of the prayer book and that *he* had asked her to call. I thanked her for contacting us on behalf of her friend and told her that it would be helpful if we had the friend's name and address since there were many other large print publications available that he might wish to have. She told me that her friend did not want to be identified and that is why she was calling. Responding to this information I told her that we would honor her friend's wishes. I then asked what would be the best way of getting this vol-

ume to the anonymous recipient. She hesitated and then told me that I could send it to her and I might even include a catalogue on other large print publications. She told me that her friend would be most grateful and that she would give it to *her* as soon as it was received. Noticing that the friend's gender switched from masculine to feminine and having picked up certain subtleties and non-subtleties in the conversation, at that point I assumed that the woman on the phone would be the one using the materials. The caller then asked what the charge would be for the publication and catalogue. I informed her that there would be no charge just as there is never any for any services of the JBI. Also, I commented that the United States Government allows us to send materials through the U. S. mail for the blind and visually handicapped free of charge so there would be again no cost to her or her friend. She then asked me whether any label would appear on the outside of the package and I told her that the name and address of the JBI would be there to identify the parcel for free postage and assure its return if for some reason it was incorrectly addressed. There was great hesitation, long pauses and various expressions of distress. At that point the woman offered to pay for the postage if I would promise that the parcel would be sent to her with no return address and in a "plain brown wrapper."

I have not heard the expression "plain brown wrapper" that many times or that often — but I have heard it. It is usually the way certain items are packaged if they embarrass us. My first recollection of a "plain brown wrapper" goes back to when I was only 7 years old. I was at summer camp and there was a marvelous place called the Canteen. Each night after dinner my friends and I went to the Canteen for a binge of ice cream, chocolates and anything

else guaranteed to insure enormous caloric intake without the risk of consuming a single vitamin. The Canteen counter had all sorts of delights for seven year olds. But on one side there were those necessities which could arouse neither enthusiasm nor interest—there were tooth brushes, tooth paste, soap, shaving cream for which neither my bunk mates nor I were quite ready, there was shampoo and hair tonic and even shoe laces. However, there was one thing that did evoke curiosity. At the extreme end on the lower part of the counter there was a stack of boxes in “plain brown wrappers.” They were always purchased by women—never by men. Women who were older than 7 or 8. A purchaser would always whisper to the lady behind the counter who would quickly give her the box in the “plain brown wrapper.” I don’t think it takes any great stretch of the imagination for any of us to figure out what the product being sold was nor do I believe there is any pharmacy or supermarket that would bother to place a brown wrapper around such a hygiene product today. The wrapper disappeared as women’s pride asserted itself. Today the “plain brown wrapper” is almost entirely relegated to the sale of tasteless and pornographic materials being ordered through the mail by embarrassed purchasers not wanting to reveal themselves to members of their families and neighbors. Why then would this woman ordering a prayer book in Hebrew and English to be used in daily worship feel the need to hide her shame behind this “plain brown wrapper.”

My caller had been an older woman who, ‘til she was past the age of seventy, had been fully sighted. For more than 7 decades she had absorbed with reinforcement society’s stereotypical attitudes towards blindness doing so without any conscientious effort as almost by osmosis. Now as

her eyesight began to fail her self-esteem depended upon the denial of her progressive blindness and when this denial was no longer possible as a technique of self deception, she went into hiding fearing that friends and family, through their pity, would destroy her sense of self-respect. She did not hide by running off into the woods or taking an airplane to a far-off destination—but rather stayed where she was “concealing her blindness.” It was “hiding to her” because in her own mind she was now *a blind woman* nothing less, but nothing more and to hide her blindness was to hide her whole self.

Friends, this is the experience of most people who are entering the nation’s blind population today. It is typical of more than 90% of the new callers to the JBI who request assistance. The calls come most often from the children of the elderly blind rarely from the blind themselves. So many of the elderly blind cannot bring themselves to use the word “blind” or even the mis-euphemism “sightless.” They’ll simply say—“I’ve got glaucoma,” or “my diabetes is affecting my sight,” or “I can’t see the way I used to.” However, when their vision has deteriorated to the point at which it is no longer of any use, they often just stop talking about it altogether. It is my opinion, and may I say only a conjecture, that most of the older blind population in this country are unknown as such to government—both Federal and state, have never received any services from agencies or libraries for the blind and will go on uncounted and unaided for the rest of their lives unless major steps are taken.

How do we know that the elderly blind are in hiding? Let’s call on some simple truths.

1. Four out of five major causes of blindness have their most serious effects on the vision of older people—



that is, cataracts, macular disease, glaucoma and diabetes. Only retinitis pigmentosa affects young people more than older people. A fact.

2. The National Health Survey of 1970 published in 1971 revealed that two out of three older Americans consider poor eyesight their #1 health problem. A fact.
3. 11 million Americans have been turned down for driver's licenses because they could not pass the vision test even with the best corrective lenses. A fact.
4. The N.Y. Times in market research related to the publication of its large print edition found that 6.7 million Americans found standard size type unusable even with corrective lenses. A fact.
5. The Book Industry Study Group—in researching book reading trends found that while 21% of older Americans increased their reading with retirement leisure, 23% who were formerly heavy readers became light or non-readers with poor vision the #1 reason. A fact.

In light of these truths I cannot believe, nor do I think you would believe that blindness is an experience shared by only a half-million Americans. We know that younger blind people most often cannot hide—education and other life needs necessitate their revealing themselves. But the elderly *can* and *do* hide. In view of all we know can anyone actually believe government figures that tell us that the number of blind people over 65 is only slightly greater than those who are younger. Common sense tells us that they are several times greater in number perhaps between 1½ and 2 million Americans in total—perhaps even more.

To come out of the closet when you can

remain in hiding is only possible for those with pride and self-respect. No organization in the history of this country has done more to help blind persons feel good about themselves than the National Federation of the Blind—no leader has inspired pride more than the man who was re-elected yesterday—Dr. Kenneth Jernigan. It is the Federation that must eventually become the spiritual home of those blind who are hiding. Certainly few of the agencies have done very much to raise the self-esteem of blind people.

At the JBI, during the past year we have been trying to effect meaningful programs in this area. We've had many successes and a number of failures but this is what is happening.

1. The JBI will be conducting Institutes this year in three major cities—Los Angeles, Houston and Miami. Each Institute will have three components:
  - a. The training of rabbis so that their role can be a more positive and appropriate one when they are doing counselling in blindness related situations.
  - b. The training of those involved in community programs for older people to increase their effectiveness.
  - c. The training of librarians on how to tap into resources for visually handicapped and blind readers.

Some of this training will provide information—some of it will just focus on common sense, which unfortunately is not always common. It is an effort to stem the proliferation of segregated activities for the senior blind—in all aspects of these Institutes blind people will take part in the training.

2. The JBI is heightening its use of the media as a way of “talking to” those

with whom we wish to have greater contact. The media are probably the most effective tools that can be used in attitudinal change.

3. Under a Challenge Grant awarded the JBI by the National Endowment for the Humanities we will be completing the conversion of our JBI library from reel-to-reel onto cassette and doing so with multiple copies of titles. We will then advertise and publicize these cassette books as reading material for the elderly as well as the blind—it is a way of starting to get through.
4. We will continue a program begun 2 years ago of assisting older blind and visually handicapped people in integrating into the social fabric of their neighborhoods.
5. We are planning a major expansion of large print resources which will include assisting neighborhood libraries in building their resources in this area.

You might ask, and understandably—will the JBI's traditional programs providing services to the blind be curtailed as funds are required to increase services to the elderly. Certainly as funds become scarce choices will have to be made—will the blind child, student, or young adult lose out? I don't think so—to date this has not been our experience. There are numerous funding sources that can be tapped that are earmarked for the elderly. In fact foundation funding available to improve the life-quality of older Americans is substantial and growing. And the elderly blind should get their fair share.

At the same time the JBI has been building its program for the elderly blind we have:

1. Increased the international resources

of Hebrew Braille—In 1980 we will publish a Hebrew Braille Dictionary in multiple copies.

2. Made a major addition to its program of biblical scholarship.
3. Increased the growth rate of all three libraries—Braille, Talking Books and Large Print.
4. In 1980 we will complete the computerization of contents of JBI library as well as reading patterns of subscribers.

And finally, in 1980 we will make an exciting addition to the JBI program. For this the Institute is profoundly grateful to Rami Rabby, 2nd Vice President of NFB and trustee of the JBI. At his suggestion and with his leadership and participation we will be publishing a cassette magazine in the Hebrew language for the blind of Israel. Its name *Or Chadash—A New Light*—was suggested by Arie Gamliel.

I think you will approve of the contents—there are articles on employment barriers and how they have begun to come down, interviews with blind people who have entered occupations not previously considered by some to be do-able by the blind. There is information on new technology such as the Kurzweil reading machine, and there are attitudes and perspective the highlight of which is an article by a famous Baltimore celebrity entitled, "Blindness—Handicap or Characteristic." Yes, Mr. Jernigan, we are your partners in carrying the Federation philosophy to those places where your message is needed.

Together we shall grow from strength to strength—we shall make a difference—shall care—we shall excite minds and hearts carrying the unchanging and unyielding message—we shall overcome.

## REPORT FROM WASHINGTON

On Friday morning, July 4, James Gashel, NFB Director of Governmental Affairs, reported to the convention on some of the most important activities of the Federation in Washington, D.C., during the last year. He spoke as follows:

"Pursuant to a resolution adopted by the 1979 convention of the NFB, we have been active to try to get funding for the new services for the blind authorized in the Rehabilitation Act Amendments of 1978, especially those titles and sections of the Act which most significantly affect and broaden services to blind persons. As you remember, we were extremely active in 1978 in bringing about provisions of the Rehabilitation Act which will expand services to older blind persons, an underserved population among the blind. Hence, Parts A and C of Title VII of the Rehabilitation Act now contain authority for state agencies to go out and serve blind people with the traditional vocational rehabilitation services that we're all familiar with. But, all of our work and the legislation have been stymied by the President and Congress. The Administration has failed to come forward with any funding whatsoever to initiate Parts A and C of Title VII. Therefore, we have led an effort to secure funding for these sections. Specifically, for Part A of Title VII, we are seeking an appropriation of \$25,000,000 which would provide a minimal amount for each state agency to use to expand services, including services for older blind persons. For Part C of Title VII, which is a special part designed exclusively to provide services for older blind persons, we are seeking \$2,000,000 in Federal appropriations. After last year's convention it was too late to work on appropriations for this year. However, early in 1980 we got together

with other people, and we have led an effort to get these appropriations funded. Here is an example of something where we led the way: The American Council of the Blind and the National Accreditation Council have not been there, but we have been on the barricades working to achieve what we set out to do in 1978 when we got these provisions enacted into law. We must now get them funded.

"Another section of the Rehabilitation Act, a part of Title III, Section 314, another provision which we worked to get enacted into law, has also, thus far, been unfolded. This Section deals with providing reading services to blind people. Our effort this year has been to secure at least \$2,000,000 in Federal funding for Section 314. Again, I haven't seen the ACB or NAC there in the halls of Congress trying to secure money for these services for the blind. We've been there."

Mr. Gashel referred conventioners to the June *Monitor* for information contained in the Appropriations Fact Sheet and he urged conventioners to make use of this information to help the Congress and the public to learn of the needs and desires of the blind of the country. He then continued as follows:

"Next I want to talk about our continuing effort to secure legislation prohibiting employment discrimination, an effort which is ongoing and to put it mildly, challenging. Despite our major victories in the Courts, despite our thorough examples of blind persons who are competent and are working in business and industry in this country, we still have a long way to go to prove to Congress and people of this country that we are able, indeed, to compete on terms of equality. But we're getting there. In the current session of the Congress,

there is a bill introduced, S 446, by Senator Harrison Williams, Chairman of the Committee on Labor and Human Resources. That bill is the most recent and the most impressive possibility that we have to achieve full civil rights protection in the area of employment discrimination. However, there are problems and you need to know about them so you can take action. By a vote of 12 to 1 on August 1, 1979, the bill was reported by the Senate Committee on Labor and Human Resources. But thereupon a major effort began, led by certain conservatives in the Senate, to keep S 446 from coming to the Senate floor. So far they have succeeded, but they will not succeed forever. Here is the current problem: Any piece of legislation which has any budget implications at all must be approved by the Senate Budget Committee before it can come to the floor. In April of this year, S 446 failed to get a waiver from this Committee so that it could be brought up on the Senate floor. Therefore, it sits awaiting some action by the Senate Budget Committee. Affirmative action would bring it to the Senate floor. The argument that has been used to keep it off the floor is that it has been said that it may cost this country as much as \$6.8 billion to protect our handicapped people from discrimination. It's not the truth: You know it and I know it, but people do believe it and it currently is standing as a road block in front of S 446."

Mr. Gashel again referred conventioners to the June *Monitor* for a fact sheet on these costs and other information about this bill. Meanwhile, introduction of HR 7423 by Congressman Paul Simon of Illinois, and the leadership of the Subcommittee on Equal Employment Opportunities in the House Education and Labor Committee has been a promising development recently in the Congress. But the

problems in the Senate continue. Mr. Gashel then said:

"Earlier this week you heard discussions by Congressman Beard and others about the minimum wage. In May of this year the Subcommittee on Labor Standards held hearings and Dr. Jernigan, representing the National Federation of the Blind, testified and put forth our position very forcefully. We're seeing attempts at retaliation by the workshop system because we have made so very much progress toward minimum wages and the right to organize. We said several things to that Committee. To the argument that sheltered workshops are places of rehabilitation we said NON-SENSE! The functions of sheltered workshops are not rehabilitation and therapy. If this rehabilitation is so great, we said, why is it that only 403 blind people (that's 7.5% of the work force of the National Industries for the Blind system) were placed in competitive industry after having been rehabilitated in the sheltered workshops? We know why it is. These are not places of rehabilitation. These are not places of therapy. They are places of work. Just look at the data. During 1979 National Industries for the Blind produced for the Federal government and private industry \$127,267,416 in gross sales. That's not rehab: That's work! Here's what one of these workshops, the Houston Lighthouse for the Blind, does for rehabilitation: During 1977 it manufactured 40,539,744 felt tip pens; it also made 250,000 mops; it produced 300,000 brushes; bottled 145,000 gallons of disinfectant; and 30,000 gallons of detergent, and this they said was rehabilitation. I say some therapy, and that's what we said to the Congress.

"Bear in mind that the workshop system is supposed to pay according to how much is produced. This is supposed to be fair and equitable. Never mind that generally

the productivity of the American worker is declining while wages continue to increase. Blind people are still tied to a productivity system. We put before the Subcommittee examples of how this productivity system actually discriminates against blind people. We used the example of Arizona Industries for the Blind, a sheltered workshop operated by the state of Arizona. That shop is a very typical one, and it has twenty-five blind workers and seven sighted workers. Nineteen of the blind workers (76%) are paid less than the minimum wage. The sighted are paid at least the minimum regardless of their productivity. The law requires that. Only one of those 32 workers in that shop makes what is called the normal productivity rating. And it is not a sighted worker, but a blind worker. Only three sighted workers are above 75% of normal productivity, yet all of them get the minimum wage. We pointed this out to the Congress and we pointed out specific examples of how these policies operate. We were able to give many examples of how the current system discriminates against the blind.

"We also dealt with the argument that workshops cannot afford to pay the minimum wage. Here is a little data from some of the balance sheets of some of these workshops that say they cannot afford to pay the minimum wage: At the end of 1976, the Industrial Home for the Blind (Joseph Larkin's outfit in New York City) was sitting on a cool net worth of \$13,689,655 but they couldn't pay the blind workers minimum wage. In 1978 the Industrial Home for the Blind, in industrial operations alone, had income of \$3,754,827 but it could only pay the blind workers 10% of that, about \$360,000. In 1977 the Jewish Guild for the Blind had excess income over expenses of over \$1,000,000. But they couldn't afford to pay the minimum wage.

At the end of 1977 they had a net worth of \$25,640,251. The New York Association for the Blind (the granddaddy of them all) had a net worth in 1977 of \$55,264,654 and during that year added to that amount \$2,156,574 but they couldn't pay the minimum wage. In case you think the New Yorkers are getting fat while the rest of us are pretty bad off, the San Francisco Lighthouse for the Blind had \$6,354,747, an increase of \$449,148 during 1977. But the San Francisco Lighthouse is more enlightened than some of the rest and its Congressman is Representative Phillip Burton (chief sponsor of our minimum wage bill in the House of Representatives). It now pays all blind workers the minimum wage. But there is the Columbia Lighthouse for the Blind (in Washington, D.C.) which in 1977 was sitting on a cool net worth of \$2,229,998, up from \$1,662,507 the previous year. Then there is a fine place which is NAC accredited called Cloverbrook. During 1977 its increase in income was \$244,534 giving it \$7,945,877 net worth at the end of 1977. We pointed out to the Subcommittee and Congress that in a random sampling, including one third of the workshops in the NIB system, 77% of the workshops had a surplus of income over expenses in 1977. Who says that they can't pay us the minimum wage? They are simply not going broke.

"In the coming year, there will be a challenge on the minimum wage. You heard what Congressman Beard said to us on Tuesday. All flags will be flying high. When the call goes out, you'll need to be ready to march and march as we never have before, and then the minimum wage is a battle which we can and must win.

"Life has now been given (as we said it would be at last year's convention) to the arbitration process which we got written into the Federal Randolph-Sheppard Act

six years ago, and we have won the Jessie Nash case. Arbitration for blind vendors has the potential of being a very important tool in our effort to achieve full first-class citizenship in this country, not just in the blind vendor program, but in the whole of rehabilitation. Through Federal arbitration we now have a clear and unequivocal ruling. When the rights of a blind vendor to a vending facility are abridged or even when they may have been abridged by the Federal property managing agency, a State Licensing Agency may not sit on its hands and let that location go down. The State Licensing Agency must act. Under the arbitration order which has just recently come out and is final, irrevocable, and official, the State Licensing Agency in the State of Georgia is ordered to engage in negotiations with the Marine Corps to secure the location in Building 2200 for Jessie Nash. If that location is not secured by a permit within 90 days, the agency in Georgia is

ordered to seek all administrative and legal remedies to secure the location for Jessie Nash. It is also recognized that the agency wronged Jessie Nash, and it is ordered to pay her back pay, fringe benefits, and attorney fees for doing her wrong. We have now seen what Federal arbitration can mean and why this organization insisted in 1974 that it had to be a part of the Randolph-Sheppard Act in order to get our support for the rest of the amendments. During this process, I had the opportunity for one day to have the State Director of a blind vending program on the witness stand under oath answering yes or no questions without wiggling or equivocation, and that was a great experience!"

Mr. Gashel said that he had a great many other things he would like to discuss, but that the resolutions he had submitted to the Resolutions Committee and to the convention would have to take care of those things because of the limited time.

### **PROGRESS ON THE KURZWEIL READING MACHINE, TALKING TERMINAL, AND PRINT TO BRAILLE SYSTEM**

by RAYMOND KURZWEIL

Ray Kurzweil, who has appeared at NFB conventions for the past several years, spoke on Friday morning. He talked about advances in the Reading Machine, and he also discussed innovations and new technology in several areas. Excerpts from his address are as follows:

Referring to the banquet speech of the evening before, (Blindness: The Lessons of History), Mr. Kurzweil said history had taught him the "value of working with the NFB." He then continued:

"This has been a particularly significant year for Kurzweil Computer Products in terms of technological progress, financial stability, and organizational strength. One

very significant thing happened recently. I am pleased to announce that as of several months ago Kurzweil Computer Products became a wholly-owned subsidiary of Xerox Corporation. You may have heard of this corporation. (Laughter.) They're a large company in the copying business. People have always said that the Reading Machine looked like a Xerox copier. This has been a tremendous step forward for our company. Let me describe some of the implications. Some things will change, and some things will not. First of all, we are the same company we were before—with the same management, the same policies, the same commitment, and (if anything) a

greater emphasis of providing services and products for the blind. What is different is that for the first time we have a level of resources far greater than anything we have ever had in the past. We also have access to Xerox technological expertise in such areas as scanning, integrated circuitry, and other such. In the area of service, you will not be able to call up your local Xerox copier repairman, but we are using Xerox technical experts in setting up a modernized regional service system. In research we have substantially expanded our efforts. We will be spending about \$4,000,000 on research alone in the next two years, about half of which will be research on items relating to the Reading Machine. The emphasis is on improvements that will benefit both future and present users of the Machine—particularly, programmable improvements that can be instantly implemented in any field unit.

“We’ve added some other important features to the Reading Machine, including a speech output system, which allows the Reading Machine to be used as a talking terminal. Last year there were about 100 reading machines in the field. Today there are about 200, and at the rate we’re going we should have doubled that again in the next year. We have completed the first model of another product: The Kurzweil Talking Terminal, which enables a blind

person to use any CRT terminal, articulating in full output speech all of the text displayed on the CRT screen. We’ve had that in the exhibit room at the convention, and many of you have seen it. We installed our first print-to-Braille system. This is a system that can convert ordinary printed material into full page grade II Braille. We have subsequently installed two other print-to-Braille systems, one of which is in England.

“We now have 150 employees, from ten when we first met the National Federation of the Blind. We will do about \$6,000,000 worth of business this year and expect to grow to over \$10,000,000 next year.

“The last lesson that I’ve learned in this business is that if you’re in the business of making technology for the blind, or providing any technology or services for the blind, working with the blind themselves and working with the organized blind in the National Federation of the Blind is good business. It’s a lot of fun and very gratifying, but it’s also good business. I think we’ve shown that. As a final note, I will end with a cliché: Success breeds success. Our relationship has been so successful over the past five years it can only lead to greater success and continued strengthening of our relationship in the years ahead.”

## THE INTERNATIONAL FEDERATION OF THE BLIND

~ by DR. FRANZ SONNTAG

Rami Rabby, Second Vice President of the National Federation of the Blind and a member of the Executive Committee of the International Federation of the Blind, presented Dr. Franz Sonntag, President of the International Federation of the Blind to the convention Friday morning. Mr. Rabby said that Dr. Sonntag has served for eleven months as President of the International Federation of the Blind and has brought to that organization a new and progressive philosophy, which was needed and which has revitalized the International Federation of the Blind. Dr. Sonntag spoke a few introductory remarks in English, thanking Federationists for the invitation to come and participate in the convention and for the opportunity of joining with us in the demonstration against the Minneapolis Society for the Blind. As a token of his feelings toward the NFB, Dr. Sonntag said that he was making a contribution of \$100 to the NFB treasury. Dr. Sonntag continued his remarks in German with his interpreter giving the English as follows:

"It is hardly possible to speak about the IFB without commemorating Dr. Jacobus tenBroek, who took the initiative in establishing the International Federation of the Blind. I remember very well the day of the founding assembly in New York in 1964 when Dr. tenBroek succeeded in drawing up this fascinating picture of a strong world-wide organization of all the blind. He addressed the representatives of approximately ten countries. Today the IFB has become a very strong power for all blind people in the world.

"I think that my election as President of the IFB at the third general convention of this organization in 1979 in Antwerp might

have been due to the fact that my own organization in the Federal Republic of Germany, the Federation of the German War Blind, had a lot of experience in organizational techniques which will be valuable in leading the IFB in its fight and struggle for equality for all blind people all over the world.

"Please let me now tell you what the International Federation of the Blind is doing for blind people in the world. The IFB publishes the *Braille International*, which is a world-wide magazine in Braille and in ink print. It is published in English, in German, and in Spanish; and we are preparing a French edition. The subscription to the *Braille International* is cost-free, and it guarantees world-wide information and establishes contact between organizations of the blind on all of the continents.

"Within the last year the IFB has founded regional committees in Europe and in East Asia. These regional committees have become very efficient and strong pillars within the IFB. Very soon the Executive Committee of the IFB is going to decide whether to found a regional committee also in Africa. Furthermore, the IFB is organizing Congresses where representatives of organizations of the blind are invited to meet with experts in the field of rehabilitation. In July, 1980, there is taking place a Congress on technical aids and appliances for the blind in the Federal Republic of Germany. This Congress is being financed with \$18,000 by a self-help organization of the blind in the German Republic, which is called the German Association of the Blind. In addition, we are preparing an International Congress on the problems of the multiply handi-



capped blind, which will take place in the Federal Republic of Germany in September, 1981, and we hope to have about 200 participants with us then. I would also like to mention the meetings the IFB has organized for blind students and blind women.

"The organizations of the blind in Europe are perfectly aware of the responsibility they have for the organizations in the third world. For this purpose the members of my organization (which is the Federation of the German War Blinded in the Federal Republic of Germany) has \$90,000 in order to be able to help blind people in the third world—Asia, Africa, and Latin America. The German Government is deeply impressed by this commitment, and it has declared its willingness to add further financial aid to enable us to carry out projects for blind people in the developing world. I hope that the IFB will be able to carry out about ten projects to aid blind people in the developing world.

"As to the relation between the IFB and the World Council for the Welfare of the Blind, there are certain difficulties. First of all, some facts: The World Council for the Welfare of the Blind has an annual budget of approximately \$160,000; whereas, the International Federation of the Blind only has an annual budget of approximately \$40,000. The NFB has to take over an important position within the IFB, I think; and (forgive me for being straight forward) I think the NFB has to give a larger sum of financial support to the IFB."

Dr. Sonntag told the convention that he could not imagine any amalgamation of the International Federation of the Blind with the World Council for the Welfare of the Blind because the IFB is determined to keep its independence and its philosophy. He concluded by saying in English: "We know who we are, and we can never go back." And the applause and cheers of the audience showed the agreement of the convention.

### **JOB OPPORTUNITIES FOR THE BLIND THE FEDERATION IN ACTION**

The success of the Job Opportunities for the Blind program (operated by the National Federation of the Blind in partnership with the U.S. Department of Labor) has exceeded all expectations. Following the convention, Job Opportunities for the Blind conducted a seminar on Saturday, July 5, which was attended by more than 200 job applicants and others who are interested in employment opportunities for the blind. On Thursday afternoon the Director of JOB, Duane Gerstenberger, gave a brief report on the activities of the program. Some of his remarks are as follows:

"Most of you will remember an old TV show which was on in the mid 1950's called Dobie Gillis. There was a character on that show by the name of Maynard G. Krebs—who, as you will remember, every time Dobie Gillis's father mentioned the word work, would go into almost an apoplectic seizure and say with consternation: 'Work!' I can tell you the blind people who have been contacting JOB have a much different regard for work than did Maynard G. Krebs.

"As you know, Job Opportunities for the Blind is a job listing referral service for all blind persons. Our goal is to find competi-

tive employment for blind Americans. JOB is proof that the blind desire to work competitively—and desire this very eagerly. The program has grown very, very rapidly. In fact, Mrs. Walhof, Mrs. Stewart, and I have had difficulty keeping up with your requests for information and your resumes and other data you have been forwarding to us.”

Mr. Gerstenberger urged anyone who was interested to go to the JOB exhibit and to get copies of the article about JOB that was printed in the *Monitor* earlier this spring, as well as the fact sheet about JOB. Mr. Gerstenberger continued:

“JOB is an integral part of the National Federation of the Blind. Federationists conceived the idea for JOB; Federationists wrote and presented the proposal to the Department of Labor; Federationists staff the program; and, (as Dr. Jernigan mentioned) a great many of us volunteer our time, energy, and work to make the JOB program what it is. As with so many programs of the Federation, not just Federationists reap the benefits. All blind persons benefit from the programs of Job Opportunities for the Blind.”

Mr. Gerstenberger said that JOB has received many generous offers of help. He recommended that an individual wishing to help should contact the Volunteer JOB Coordinator in his or her state. In addition,

he thanked individuals who have helped get public information about the program circulated to those who need it and encouraged anyone who is interested in this type of work to continue doing it. He reminded Federationists that the JOB In Wats line (which is 1-800-638-7518) is available for use as needed, but only for use by those who need to contact Job Opportunities for the Blind. Mr. Gerstenberger listed five items that have been produced on disc or on cassette for use by blind individuals, which were being distributed by Job Opportunities for the Blind in the exhibit room. Mr. Gerstenberger also reminded Federationists that any blind person who is unemployed or wishes to make a change in employment is eligible to register as an applicant with JOB. This may be done by using the In Wats number or by sending a copy of a resume to JOB headquarters.

Mr. Gerstenberger reviewed briefly the first JOB seminar, which was held in April; reminded Federationists of the July 5th seminar; and announced the third seminar to be held for job applicants. It will be held at NFB headquarters, 1800 Johnson Street, Baltimore, Maryland 21230, October 4, 1980. He urged anyone who is interested in employment of the blind (particularly, job applicants) to plan to attend this seminar.

### CONVENTION 1980 FEDERATIONISTS AT WORK COMPETING ON TERMS OF EQUALITY

Mr. Charles Brown (Counsel for Special Legal Service, Office of the Solicitor, United States Department of Labor; and President of the NFB of Virginia) gave a witty description of his responsibilities at work. He said: “In the last nine years my

job has given me the opportunity to become involved in every program that the Department of Labor has responsibility for, and in areas where we don't have responsibility but in which we are interested. These latter areas would include health care

and collective bargaining, which are the primary responsibility of some other agency; but they are of interest to working people and of interest, therefore, to us.

"Let me give you a little bit of an idea of some of the things we do when we are on a legislative assignment: We write testimony, the bills themselves, background papers, and decision papers. Writing is one of the great marketable skills in Washington, D.C. I urge any of you contemplating a career in government or in the private sector dealing with government to learn how to write. Unfortunately that's something I had to learn on the job largely.

"Some of the bills I've worked on over the years are the Labor Law Reform (ill-fated as it was), legislation on the structure of collective bargaining in the construction industry, and the Farm Labor Contractor Registration Act. I was also involved in activities to extend the National Labor Relations Act to employees of non-profit hospitals. Today we have a bill that I've worked hard to develop over some years to improve the confidentiality protection of data that is submitted by the public to the Bureau of Labor Statistics.

"Any time a law is passed and the Secretary of Labor gets responsibility in the law, he has to delegate that down to somebody who actually can and will do it. The delegation of authority has to be in accordance with the law, and we provide the kind of legal advice to make sure the delegation is correct. Our office also administers the Ethics in Government Act provisions and deals with related kinds of conflicts of interest. We also work on legal problems that come up with national emergency strikes like the coal strike.

"With regard to coworkers (aside from an occasional comment that reveals a stereotyped attitude) I've had no problems with coworkers. Those that say that blind man-

agers do or would have problems are just plain wrong.

"In light of long hours and crazy schedules and not knowing always what I'll be doing from day to day, I do occasionally think of why I'm doing what I'm doing. I then remember those in my law school faculty who advised me to specialize because as a blind person that would be easier. I've come to the realization that I'm not *just* a blind person. I have other personality traits. One of them is a need for constant variety and new things to do. This may create some problems in terms of keeping up with the literature that needs to be read, but it's a price I'm willing to pay in order to have what I believe to be an especially interesting and challenging job."

Another panelist was Franklin VanVliet, who is President of the NFB of New Hampshire and also President of Tri-Mountain Enterprises, Inc. in Sunapee, New Hampshire. Mr. VanVliet said that he has operated a vending facility in the state of New Hampshire since 1967. He then continued: "In 1975 we passed in the state of New Hampshire a baby Randolph-Sheppard Act. As a result of that, there was an opportunity to operate concessions in some of the state parks throughout New Hampshire. There are some thirty-two parks in the state of New Hampshire, and the concessions had been operated by concessionaires of one sort or another or by the Department of Recreation and Resource Economic Development. Blind Services, under which the Randolph-Sheppard Act is operated, had the opportunity to operate some of the concessions in state parks. Three major parks were under consideration: Mt. Sunapee, Franconia, and Mt. Washington. First, Mt. Washington was put into effect with an operator who was selected to go there. In 1976 I was

given the opportunity to go into Mt. Sunapee. When I agreed to take that challenge, there were bare walls and no equipment. The Vending Facility Program had no money to purchase equipment, and I was told: 'If you do it, you're going to have to do it on your own.' I felt good about that. I had to round up some equipment concerns that could supply the equipment that was necessary. We took the bear by the tail and started twisting and started getting results. People were willing to assist on this. The first thing I knew, we had about \$110,000 tied up in the equipment. I felt that it was necessary to incorporate. This was not in accord with what the State Program for the Blind was willing that we should do, but we did it anyway to protect ourselves and our investment. Incorporating has turned out to be a good thing for us. We're into food and gifts and just about anything else that's legal. Our corporation is Tri-Mountain Enterprises, and we do the food concessions at Mt. Sunapee. We have four to six thousand people coming through a day in the winter time. We also run a catering service and have purchased a restaurant to help us out in the off season. I encourage any vendors who wish to be truly independent to own your own stuff."

A third panelist was Mr. David Dillon, reporter for Radio Station KCBC in Des Moines, Iowa. Mr. Dillon said in part: "In 1977 and '78, when I heard of the difficulties Dr. Jernigan was having at the Iowa Commission for the Blind, my heart went out to him and to the Commission. I had loved the Commission and loved Dr. Jernigan. I knew the values he stood for, and I had personal memories, like the college student dinner at the Bohemian Club in Des Moines when I shared a delectable meal and a flaming dessert with Mr. Jernigan. I remember the hope and courage that

he instilled. I knew that as a writer I must get some answers. I persuaded the *Village Voice* to commission a piece. This would have been my first assignment with the *Voice* and a real opportunity to break into the New York media. It was not easy to get that assignment because New York editors screen their phone calls.

"I began a project of truly massive research and documentation, and I determined that the real problem that Dr. Jernigan had suffered from was a great corporate empire, the NAC combine. But the story I submitted to the *Village Voice* did not appear in print because L. E. Apple wrote a letter to the *Village Voice* saying that I had belonged to organizations critical of the American Foundation. These organizations included the Iowa Commission for the Blind and the National Federation of the Blind. When the *Voice* backed away from the story, I demanded to know why and received no explanation. On the other hand, when I tried to approach an editor there to get an explanation and find out what had happened, a flunky there at the desk told that editor that she didn't need to talk to me or see me because, since I was blind, I didn't know she was there.

"This awakened me to the fact that I was not just someone who is nearsighted. I had to face what I had been trying to avoid for a decade, (and it wasn't easy) that I am, in fact, a blind person. All along I had known the philosophy of the Federation and supported it. Now, I knew that I also had to *live* it. That's what really counts. While Apple had falsely stated that I belonged to the NFB, I had the honor to redeem from falsehood at least one of the lies that he told, and I joined the Federation.

"In January of 1979 I approached Gil Cranberg, Editorial Page Editor of the *Des Moines Register*, with some trepidation. I told him that I was a good writer

and praised the positive parts of the newspaper's history, but I said that if I were to be employed there I would have to exercise freedom of conscience and write what I believe about the Federation and the Iowa Commission for the Blind. The interest Cranberg had shown until that moment in my portfolio turned to icicles. He made it clear that if this 'freedom of conscience' were a condition of my employment, he could not use me. For the second time a literary opportunity for me had been thwarted by the NAC combine.

"Nevertheless, my family and I came back to Iowa in the summer of 1979. I heard that Radio Station KCBC needed a news reporter, and I was interviewed by the News Director, Eric Davis, on the fourth of July of last year."

Mr. Dillon said that Mr. Davis and the corporate Vice President had some concerns about his blindness but he got the job. His job began with a 90-day period of probation, but now he is doing the evening drive news every day, and a public affairs program every week. He has interviewed presidential candidates, and he said he will not be stopped.

Another panelist was Miss Donna Sorenson, who is President of the NFB of North Dakota and who works as a machinist for Rugby Hydraulics in Rugby, North Dakota. Miss Sorenson brought with her some special tools she uses on the job and passed them around so that blind persons in the audience could examine them. Miss Sorenson said that in 1975 she found a teacher named Don Dietrich, who was pleased to work with a blind person. She said that the more people tried to talk her out of becoming a machinist the more determined she and her teacher became that she would succeed. Her training took eight months, and she spent the six months after that looking for work. In desperation

Miss Sorenson wrote to Hubert Humphrey. She said: "Although I didn't know it at the time, he knew he had cancer. In spite of that, I got a response from him in a week saying that he'd get on it right away, and he did. Mr. Humphrey found two men (one to work in Minnesota and one to work in North Dakota) to help me find a job.

"They found me a job at a place called Rugby Hydraulics, where I am now machining parts for hydraulic cylinders. If the machining isn't close enough, these seals will either explode or leak. I've seen both things happen. Fortunately it didn't happen with my parts. I have a really wonderful employer. He certainly follows the theory of the Federation, and I love him for it. He has never discriminated against me for any reason. I am on the pay scale right along with sighted people, and it makes me happy to know it. When I asked him for tools to bring to this convention so that people could kind of feel what I'm doing, he gave me brand new tools—\$200 worth of tools. He has as much confidence in you people as I do."

Miss Sorenson said she uses a Braille micrometer to measure the diameter of metal shafts with which she is working. She said that the most tolerance she is ever permitted is about the thickness of a hair.

Mr. Darryl Nather (Revenue Officer, Group Manager for the Collections Division of the Internal Revenue Service in Anchorage, Alaska) told the convention about his experiences when he became blind:

"About three years ago when I first became blind," he said, "my employer refused to let me return to work. I was not a member of the NFB at that time, but I needed assistance; and I didn't know who to go to. The employers for whom I had worked for the past eleven years in Anchorage and in Denver refused to let me return to work.

Where did I go? I went to the NFB Office in Anchorage, and I met a man called Sandy Sanderson. I told him about the discrimination that had occurred, and he didn't hesitate. He didn't ask if I was an NFB-er. He picked up the telephone and talked to Dr. Jernigan. I then spoke to some NFB lawyers, and they told me what I could do. Even though I had to go get an attorney, fortunately I did not have to go to court.

"I was able to return to work in a temporary position with no loss of pay to show that I could do the job that I had once done. Within ninety days I was back at the job that I had previously held.

"If you believe you can do it, go out and shoot for what you want. If you want a job, get the training and other qualifications necessary for that job, and don't let anybody tell you you can't do it."

### RECIPE OF THE MONTH

by CAROL CLARK

#### CHOCOLATE COCONUT BARS

*(Note: Carol Clark is one of the leaders of the NFB of Iowa and the past president of the National Association of Blind Secretaries and Transcribers.)*

##### BASE:

Cream  $\frac{1}{2}$  cup butter, 3 tablespoons cocoa, 1 cup flour and  $1\frac{1}{2}$  cups sugar.

Add 3 eggs and 1 cup nuts.

Batter will be very stiff. Pour on large greased cake pan  $13 \times 9$  and bake 30 minutes at 350.

##### FILLING:

Mix 2 cups coconut with one 14 oz. Eagle Brand milk.

Spread on base while still warm. Return to oven for 15 minutes.

##### FROSTING:

Mix 1 square Bakers chocolate, 1 tablespoon butter, 2 teaspoons vanilla, 2 cups powdered sugar and add enough hot water to spread.

#### MONITOR MINIATURES □ □ □ □ □

□ The American Brotherhood for the Blind announces a new publication, *Questions Kids Ask About Blindness*. Single complimentary copies are available on re-

quest from the American Brotherhood for the Blind Headquarters, 1800 Johnson Street, Baltimore, Maryland 21230. If multiple copies are desired, they are available at \$1.00 each. This book consists of two parts: Part 1 is a series of questions commonly raised by children and answers

to these questions; Part 2 is "A Day With Joe Jones," a blind sixth-grader enrolled in public school.

□ Susan Ford, Chairperson of the Committee on Parental Concerns, writes that COPC has for sale a recorded edition of *A Resource Guide for Parents and Educators of Blind Children* by Doris Wiloughby. The book is complete on three cassettes and costs \$7.50. It can be ordered by writing Susan Ford, 1135 Third Avenue, East, Kalispell, Montana 59901.

□ JoAnn Kelly of Mount Pleasant, Michigan would like to hear from blind people interested in learning to throw on the potter's wheel. Plans are being made to conduct a six-week workshop during the summer of 1981 at Central Michigan University. Interested persons should contact JoAnn Kelly, 1110 Elm, Mount Pleasant, Michigan 48858; phone: (517) 772-9101. Write in Braille, print or on tape.

□ The "talking clock", announced in the September *Monitor*, has turned out to be very popular. The price has now been reduced from \$80 to \$68. *Monitor* readers will remember that this clock not only announces the time but also serves as an alarm clock and stop watch. The American Foundation for the Blind is selling the identical clock for \$90.

□ A leadership seminar was held Labor Day weekend at the National Center for the Blind at 1800 Johnson Street in Baltimore. Could it be a measure of increased affluence among blind individuals that this group called itself the "Home-Owners Seminar"?

□ We are printing without comment the

following from the *Des Moines Register* of Thursday, July 24, 1980:

Eight persons picketed outside the Iowa Commission for the Blind's headquarters in Des Moines Wednesday to protest what they called the Commission's 'declaration of war upon the blind.'

The eight, including at least some members of the National Federation of the Blind of Iowa, were upset with a Commission vote last month to spend \$8,000 to review how the Commission's programs serve blind Iowans. Picket Cheryl Finley said the purpose of the review is 'not to improve services' but to turn the Commission into a self-serving professional establishment which no longer seeks partnership with (blind people), but aspires to control them instead.

John Taylor, Commission Director, denied Finley's charge, saying she is upset because only one of the three people conducting the review is blind.

Sylvester Nemmers, President of the National Federation of the Blind of Iowa, said Finley is also upset because none of the three belongs to the Baltimore, Maryland-based National Federation of the Blind, the parent of the Iowa group.

□ The 1980 Baby Boom: Dean and Suzie Stanzel of Kansas City, Kansas announce the arrival of a baby girl on September 10. Loretta Marie weighed in at seven pounds, fifteen ounces. Tom and Rhonda Bozikis of Evansville, Indiana, welcomed Michael Gregory into their family on July 27. Mr. and Mrs. Allen Harris of Dearborn, Michigan, announce the arrival of their son, Eric Allen. The Harris' already had two girls, so they were (quite correctly, as it proved) expecting a boy.







